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## The Week

IF President Butler of Columbia were seeking confirmation of his statement that disregard of one law does not necessarily imply disrespect for all law—a thesis elaborated at some length in The New Republic several months ago by Robert C. Binkley—he need look no further than recent events in New London. There, members of the Coast Guard, after sternly upholding the majesty of law in general by shooting and killing three rum runners who refused to stop when ordered to do so, proceeded to show their contempt of prohibition in particular by getting drunk and engaging in a brawl with sailors at a shore party—having imbibed, it is reported, the very liquor which they captured from those who had paid with their lives for law violation. It causes us neither surprise nor indignation to learn that Coast Guard members drink; in so doing they are following a social usage having the equivalent of legal sanction, which prevails both among the uniformed forces and the citizenry of the government which vainly attempts to enforce prohibition. But the incident is the very symbol of the absurdity which appears when a government tries to compel obedience to a law to which great masses of the people do not accord moral sanction.

WE CAN think of no easier way in which the Anti-Saloon League could win a deserved unpopularity than to become an ally of the electric power lobby, and no way in which the electric power lobby could more quickly increase its existing unpopularity than to coöperate with the Anti-Saloon League. It is therefore an occasion for rejoicing that both have united to defeat the renomination of Senator Norris of Nebraska—one of the ablest and most independent members of the Senate. It is an occasion for rejoicing, that is, unless they accomplish their purpose. The hostility of the power interests is readily understandable, since Senator Norris has been a valiant fighter for public development of Muscle Shoals—at first a lonely fighter, but recently a successful one, so far as the Senate is concerned. On the other hand, however, Senator Norris is personally and politically a dry. His offense, so far as the Anti-Saloon Leage is concerned, is that he refuses to regard prohibition as the sole and supreme issue before the American people. He endorsed Al Smith for the presidency, in spite of the candidate's wet stand, and because of his program on power—believing that for the time being it was more important to have the power issue settled in behalf of the public. This refusal to be fanatic was, of course, damning to his reputation with the professional drys, who have no public conscience where their cause is concerned. What matter if the American people lose every other right and interest, so long as there is the slightest chance of compelling them to comply with the single moral standard of the prohibitionist?

AMERICAN exponents of the protective tariff should have no difficulty in sympathizing with the French threat to put a prohibitive duty on imports of automobiles and automobile parts. "Cheap foreign labor"—in the United States—can produce these things at a lower cost than they can be made in France. Henry Ford has a large assembly plant in France, where he puts together parts made in this country and threatens to capture a large part of the French market. To "protect the French workers," therefore, French purchasers must be pro-


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hibited from buying any cars except those made exclusively in their own country. We have no right to protest; we use precisely the same weapon and the same logic against French products. What about the American automobile workers who depend on exports for employment? They are in the same boat as the French workers who depend on exports to us. Thus, "protecting the workers" of each country injures the workers of the other. Any number of nations can play this game. The net result is that the consumers of each nation—including such workers as may be consumers—have to buy products which are higher in price or are less desirable than those they could buy if no tariff existed. Employment, on the whole, is no greater than it would be without tariffs. And each nation's productive energies are directed to those things which it is less well fitted to produce.

THE selection of Mr. H. H. Broach, still under forty, to succeed President James P. Noonan of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers reveals a spirit of progress in one important labor group. In February, 1926, the Electrical Workers' Local Union No. 3, of New York City, found itself in an impasse with employers over wage questions. Turning to the international office of the union, the local asked for assistance, and was granted the services of International Vice-President Broach. Through his intercession, the wage questions went for adjudication before the National Council on Industrial Relations for the Electrical Construction Industry, where the union won a favorable decision. The National Council, however, required the union to make certain changes in its system limiting membership. Mr. Broach sought to get local officers to keep their part of the agreement. He was met with bitter and unintelligent opposition. Suspicious, he discovered that local officers were condoning illegal practices, such as accepting special favors, receiving bribes, controlling elections and operating an employment machine. To top this list of misdemeanors, they were taking orders from anti-union employers. He preferred charges against the local officials. The International ousted them. He was met with a barrage of vituperation, court injunctions and thuggery. Despite these difficulties he was able to rebuild completely the machinery of the local union on a healthy basis, greatly increasing its membership, doubling the work controlled, winning new wage increases and the five-day week, instituting new insurance benefits, and winning the confidence of employers and the public.

THE STORY of the testimonial dinner offered to Magistrate Albert H. Vitale, of New York City, by his fellow members of the Tepecano Democratic Club, is becoming an idyll, an epic and a fairy tale. Idyllic is the description of the dinner itself, at which racketeers and magistrates, detectives and ex-convicts, broke bread together in a moment of golden tranquility. Epic is the sudden descent of bandits on this symposium; and epic, too, the tale unfolded by Inspector Donovan, of how this descent was plotted by Ciro Terranova, the Artichoke King, in order to recover a contract he had signed with a visiting Chicago gangster—a contract providing that Terranova (hereinafter described as the party of the first part) would pay the sum of $20,000 to Gangster X (hereinafter described as the party of the second part) upon the murder of Frankie Yale and Frankie Marlow (hereinafter jointly described as the defunct). But the story of how the loot was returned by a fairy godmother, and of how a friend of Magistrate Vitale's found a service revolver in the snow, where it had doubtless been thrown from the airplane in which the bandits made their escape into the realm of mythology—this story ranks with the best of Andrew Lang and Hans Christian Anderson.

MEANWHILE, in its enthusiasm over the purely literary aspects of the story, the New York public is in danger of forgetting certain essential facts—first, that the murderers of Yale and Marlow are still at large; second, that a magistrate who seems to be socially connected with racketeers and dope peddlers, and who discharged these social connections of his when they were brought into court, has been allowed to serve unmolested, and even to be reëlected. At present he is in danger of removal, but this, so it appears, is chiefly because Tammany Hall—"the new Tammany"—is ready to dispense with his services. And it is evident from news reports and the statements of men like Norman Thomas that Vitale is not the only New York City magistrate grotesquely unfitted to hold office.

WHILE a sub-committee of the New York Bar Association is investigating his case, it might also investigate the unmagisterial conduct of Sylvester Sabbatino, who presides over the Flatbush police court, in Brooklyn. Consider his treatment of David and Miriam Weiss, aged seventeen and fifteen, respectively. On December 21, they were arrested in the subway for soliciting funds to help the Gastonia strikers. They said in court that they were Communists. Magistrate Sabbatino, believing that these children of naturalized citizens could be deported for their opinions, had them committed to Raymond Street jail, where they were held over Christmas without bail and without being allowed to communicate with their family.

IN THE case of the girl, this detention was illegal because of her age, and she was promptly dismissed when she appeared in Children's Court. The boy, tried by Sabbatino, was dismissed after a lecture that might have been delivered by Judge Jeffreys himself in the Bloody Assizes. He was accused of having "a diseased mind"; he was called "a mongrel and a moron." His mother was advised to buy a cat-o'-nine-tails, after the magistrate

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had explained that he kept one himself, the mere sight of which was enough to control his children. What young Weiss needed was "some real American spirit"; and Sabbatino expressed the wish to inculcate this spirit by meeting him alone in "a two-by-four room" and blackening both his eyes. Mussolini, it is said, hates Communists with almost the same fervor as this New York City magistrate. Was Sabbatino speaking for the ears of the Italian dictator? Was he trying, like other politicians, to cloak his own misdeeds with patriotism? Or was he merely stupid, hot-tempered, and unfit to serve on the bench?

AFTER the recent explosion in the Old Town mine at North McAlester, Oklahoma, where sixty miners were trapped and killed, the manager of the colliery issued a statement which proves, better than any argument, the need for a general reorganization of the American coal-mining industry. The company, he said, carried no compensation insurance for its employees. It would be unable to give much financial aid to the destitute relatives of the dead miners. To repair the shaft would be an expensive undertaking, and for this reason he did not know whether the mine would ever be reopened. Thus, owing to the financial irresponsibility of a company which should never have been allowed to engage in mining, the mine itself is destroyed along with most of its working population, and those dependent on the mine for a livelihood are left with neither money nor means of earning it.

## France's Purpose at London

IN approaching the London Naval Conference, France has declined to play the game in the way in which Hoover and MacDonald have agreed to play it. Her expressed logic is simple and unassailable—it is in part the same as that which The New Republic has pointed out ever since the failure of the Geneva Conference. Lack of agreement on neutral rights at sea in time of war makes it uncertain how navies would be used, and thus is an obstacle to agreement on naval limitation. The Kellogg Pact theoretically outlaws war, and if it worked perfectly it would automatically solve the problem of sea law by depriving the neutral of the desire to trade with an aggressor, and depriving anyone of a right to object to neutral trade with a defensive belligerent. But the Kellogg Pact is imperfect in that it provides no method by which the signatories may agree in recognizing an aggressor. Therefore France refuses to see in it an adequate basis for naval reduction. Indeed, she says ironically that Great Britain and the United States have apparently also failed so to regard it, in spite of their declarations, since their announced tentative agreement involves little or no reduction of tonnage. France therefore falls back on the League Covenant as the only safeguard, and will consent to reduce, if at all, only under League auspices. The London Conference can be only a preliminary to a broader agreement at Geneva.

Hoover and MacDonald have tacitly agreed to overlook the lack of implementation of the Kellogg Pact. They are ready to go ahead on the assumption that differences in its interpretation will not arise. With this matter settled, how far they can go in naval limitation depends chiefly on the attitude of France, since the limits of American building depend, with our assumption that we must have "parity" with Great Britain, on how far Great Britain will reduce, and Great Britain will not reduce unless France will do so. Britain leans toward a two-power standard in the Mediterranean, and she might theoretically be menaced in other seas as well if France continues with her 400,000-ton cruiser program. We have formerly said that Hoover's position is tenable if it is a practical aid to naval reduction—since that is the immediate goal, rather than distant strategic objectives in a hypothetical war which it is the aim of all to avoid. But Hoover's position is a practical aid only if all the other powers concerned will adopt it. France declines to do so. Why has she made this choice? Is it merely the result of a constitutional liking for logic rather than for results?

It has been suggested that the attitude of France is designed to bring the London Conference to nought, because she fears a new Anglo-American entente as a substitute for the Anglo-French entente. If she can prevent the United States and Great Britain from agreeing about navies, she will renew the friction between them. The failure of the Conference would also endanger the Labor government which has made the shift, and might bring back into power the Conservatives who so consistently played with France. All this may be true, but if so, it does not, for reasons which we shall point out, furnish a good reason for calling off the Conference. Furthermore, there is another reasonable explanation of the French policy, which was in evidence long before the supposed danger of an Anglo-American entente began to be discussed.

France has a supreme interest—or believes she has—in maintaining the status in Europe left by the treaty of Versailles, which divided and weakened her possible enemies. The machinery of the League, so far as it is effective, might be relied upon to do this work, since it would inevitably brand as an aggressor any nation trying by force of arms to upset that status. France has also consistently opposed any attempt to enable the League machinery to allow change in that status by other than forcible means. If League sanctions were sufficiently ironclad to give France the "security" which is her obsession—*i. e.* to call all other members to her aid in forcible action against an aggressor—she might perhaps consent to partial disarmament. But for the present, at any rate, she guards above all else her military and air supremacy on the Continent. She looks to her land frontiers rather than

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to her ocean lanes. Naval strength means little to her beside her army.

But her naval strength has a supreme nuisance-value to her as against Great Britain. She has consistently used it as a means of forcing Great Britain to assent to her aims in Europe. England can never risk the hostile use of her submarines or of her potential cruiser fleet. France does not wish to give up that threat without more assurance of international support to the League as an agency to sit on the Continental lid. Furthermore, in the present situation, she sees naval reduction as a bargaining weapon wherewith to enforce her present objection to reduction of her army and air forces. She does not wish to agree to naval reduction first, and then to discuss other forms of disarmament separately. She wishes to consider all forms of disarmament together, and to give England and the United States the naval reduction they want only in exchange for consent to her large armament in other quarters. Even then, she would undoubtedly not consent to abandon her submarine threat. This is, we believe, the real meaning of her insistence that the London Conference can only be a tentative discussion, preliminary to the general conference at Geneva.

Whether her policy is informed by this purpose, or by her supposed fear of an Anglo-American entente, we believe the best course for Great Britain and the United States is to go ahead with their original plan so far as possible, and to make it possible by taking France at her word. France points out that the Kellogg Pact is not a satisfactory basis for disarmament because it is not implemented. Very well; why not implement it? Why not build on the precedent of the four-power Pacific Pact which accompanied the Washington agreement to limit battleships? Why not agree that, in case of a situation menacing the peace of the signatory powers, they would confer to consider what joint action might be taken? This need not mean a hard-and-fast undertaking to make war on any aggressor. It might lead merely to conciliation or mediation, or to a decision not to trade with a nation which declines arbitration or other pacific means of settlement. With such assurance of co-operation, France could be asked to revise her logic. She would either have to come in, or disclose some less logical objection, and find real isolation by seeing the consummation of a pact of four, three or two powers which excluded her. We are confident that she could not face such an alternative.

Any British government would, it is true, court internal disaster by agreeing to much naval reduction if France should continue to build. On that basis, one may argue that no agreement is possible if France will not join. But that consideration should not lie in the way of an earnest attempt to reach an agreement. It would indeed be a mistake to go ahead ignoring France's logic. But that logic may be met without losses or risks to the other powers concerned. Then France would either consent to join, or her logic would be revealed as a bluff. That bluff could easily be called by the other powers, if they demonstrated their intention to go ahead without her.

# The Irrepressible Issue Again

PROHIBITION is back on the front pages again—as usual. Three unarmed men have been shot down by the Coast Guard, and a fourth dangerously wounded. A young man in a motor-boat, in New York state waters, has been shot and killed merely because he did not stop at the command of the border patrol. Rum Row has reappeared off the coast of Long Island, and liquor is unusually plentiful and cheap, at least along the Atlantic seaboard. It is in Washington, however, that the most interesting developments have taken place. Senator Borah has described the present attempts at prohibition enforcement as a farce, arguing that the law is being universally disregarded and that the enforcement personnel is inefficient from top to bottom. He says the withdrawal of liquor on permit is a scandal and is "being used in such a way as to demoralize the whole enforcement system." He has also criticized the United States Attorneys for failing to prosecute bootlegging cases with sufficient vigor, and Attorney General Mitchell has responded to this by issuing orders that cases shall not be dropped by prosecuting officers without the consent of his office—an order which seems likely to increase the congestion in the already desperately over-crowded federal courts. So critical, indeed, is the condition in regard to the machinery for enforcement, that Mr. Hoover's famous committee on law enforcement is expected to bring in an interim report in the near future, calling for immediate increased appropriations by Congress and the appointment of additional federal judges. The wets in both Houses are making the most of the opportunity, and once more the mournful battle-cry of "light wines and beers" reëchoes faintly down the marble halls.

Any discussion of prohibition at the present stage in its history should be based on three fundamental questions: Ought it to be enforced? Does anyone want it enforced? Can it be enforced? The first of these we do not propose to discuss in detail at the present moment; the nature of the American Constitution, and the present political situation, render it relatively academic just now. The second, however, is pertinent to the highest degree. The actions of Congress, and of the executive branch, in regard to enforcement, have for years been shot through with hypocrisy. Everyone knows how many men there are in the House and Senate who "vote dry but drink wet"; who help to pass laws, such as the Jones "five and ten" measure, but would be heartbroken if these laws were enforced against themselves and their friends. For reasons of political expediency which do them no credit, they have pretended to their dry constituents at home that

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successful enforcement exists, and have thus been not only personally but officially hypocritical about the gravest situation which has developed in our national life since the Civil War. The attitude of the Hoover administration, like that of the Coolidge, is on the whole one of *laissez-faire*. While Mr. Hoover apparently believes in prohibition, he is ten thousand miles from the fanaticism of an Anti-Saloon Leaguer. His investigating committee was certainly not intended merely to find ways and means by which prohibition could be made 100 per-cent effective; it was intended to take this trouble-some issue out of the campaign of 1928 to the greatest possible extent, and thereafter, to postpone it on the quite correct principle that sometimes a trouble which is put off becomes less formidable while it is being kept in storage. Certainly it is true that not many of those who have the matter in their hands are anxious for any such degree of enforcement as would satisfy the real prohibitionist.

Assuming the will to enforce, is such a thing possible? As to this, no rough and ready answer can be given. The law is much better enforced now in certain sections of the country than in others, depending entirely upon the character of the local sentiment. No doubt in any district, the amount of drinking could be much reduced by dotting the landscape with policemen. It is the universal testimony of those who are in a position to know, however, that to obtain anything like effective enforcement throughout the United States, the country would need to be turned into an armed camp. The cost of prohibition would need to be increased by hundreds of millions of dollars annually, and this money could only be found by a heavy increase in taxation. There seems absolutely no chance that Congress would vote such appropriations, even for a short experimental period such as the wets have so often advocated.

There is in all this nothing that is particularly new; but what is new, and highly important, is that for the first time the prohibitionists are coming to recognize the intolerable present state of affairs. Heretofore there has been much truth in the observation of the cynic that everything is satisfactory, since the drys have the law, and the wets have the liquor. The prohibitionists, with mental processes which ought to be a fruitful source of study for psychologists for a hundred years to come, have clung to what ought to be and have ignored what is. But this can no longer be said. Senator Borah is a prohibitionist; yet he has now come forward to say what the wets have been saying for so long: that we cannot go on as things are. If his views are shared by other important prohibitionists—and we believe that they are—the country is entering upon a new stage, in which the Noble Experiment, as it now exists, is definitely on trial. The New Republic heartly welcomes this development. Only when all elements are willing to face the facts can we have the realistic discussion on which remedial action—in any direction—must be based.

# The End of "Extrality"

CHINA has abolished extra-territoriality. With all its newly acquired indifference to diplomatic niceties and the solemn warnings of the Great Powers before which it used to cower abjectly not so long ago, it has simply announced that, from January 1, 1930, extra-territoriality ceases to exist, and all foreign residents in China must submit to Chinese legal jurisdiction. Thus it takes the last step in the course on which it set out ten years ago.

Germany and Austria-Hungary lost their extra-territorial rights when China entered the War against them, and they acknowledged the fact in the peace treaties concluded with China. Russia similarly renounced its rights in 1924, after China had abrogated them. In the last ten years, Latin-American and lesser European powers establishing diplomatic relations with China for the first time have had to waive extra-territorial benefits, and in 1928 new treaties were concluded with Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Portugal and Spain in which those countries relinquished extra-territoriality, if and when the Great Powers did so. No doubt they signed these treaties tongue in cheek, quite secure in the belief that the stronger powers would never yield their privileges. The device of passing the buck from one country to another is of ancient lineage in the Far East. No country has ever refused China anything. Every nation usually has conceded everything on the condition that the others did the same, knowing that they would not. But the mood of contemporary China is somewhat different from that of former times. The Nanking government at once proceeded formally to ask the remaining powers to open negotiations for the abolition of extra-territoriality. The Great Powers refused, with their classical explanation that they did not deem the time to be ripe. China had not yet set its house in order. But the Nanking government also gave notice that these negotiations were only a formality, since it intended, in any case, to abolish extra-territoriality on January 1, 1930. The Powers stood their ground, and now January 1, 1930, has come and the Chinese have acted according to schedule.

What are the foreign governments, including our own, going to do about it? The State Department allows the newspapers to say that it will protect the rights of American citizens in China. Just how, is a neat question that it does not answer, if indeed it has faced it—which, on past performances in the Far East, is by no means certain. The foreign courts still exist, in the cities where they are protected by foreign bayonets. These are also the cities where the majority of the foreigners reside and where, presumably, there is the greatest chance for legal disputes to arise. China henceforth will not recognize the existence of these courts, and the validity of their decisions is clouded, to say the least.

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Physically, nothing is changed. Morally, the Nanking government has staked its prestige on its ability successfully to defy the Powers. If, as a result of its action, the courts should be withdrawn by the Powers in the course of the next few months, it will have won a very important victory. If the courts remain, it will have lost caste in its international relations, but it will have strengthened its popularity with the masses of the Chinese people, among whom anti-foreign feeling is still the predominant emotion. And in the meantime, there will be an extension of a process which has long been under way: in the inland cities where there are no foreign garrisons, where nationals of the Great Powers are already to a considerable degree subjected to the jurisdiction of the Chinese courts, they will be even more so. The experience of the Germans and Russians shows that this is by no means the catastrophe that London and Washington allege that they fear.

At the same time, there is no use pretending that the situation does not possess elements of danger. With foreign rights undefined, and foreigners in China living in a legal no-man's-land, a self-important Chinese official or a hot-headed foreigner, determined to show these natives where they get off if they start getting fresh with a white man, may precipitate an incident which will develop explosively. It was only one volley ordered by a British municipal official in Shanghai in 1925 that set off the whole train of consequences which ended in the killing of a number of foreigners in Nanking two years later, and brought China and the Powers to the verge of war. The foreign governments, including our own, must either make up their minds whether they can really protect the extra-territorial interests of their nationals in China, or they must regularize the situation by acknowledging the facts and formally giving up what they no longer have. And it is very doubtful that they can maintain those interests. The American government in particular knows well enough that American people are in no mood for a war over something like extra-territoriality, which they could not even define. It might be wise not to wait until the word is translated in terms of clashes and casualties.

# What India Wants

THE members of the All-India National Congress, meeting at Lahore, have passed a resolution demanding immediate independence for India, and endorsing a program of "civil disobedience," including the non-payment of taxes in order to achieve this goal. A few days before this resolution was passed, an attempt was made to bomb the train carrying Lord Irwin, the Viceroy —though there is, of course, no proof that the bombing was the work of anyone connected, directly or indirectly, with the Nationalists. But whoever was responsible for the attempted assassination, it is clear that extremism has shown itself in India at the very moment when a long step forward toward conciliation has been taken in London. The moral seems to be, as usual, that the step toward conciliation came much too late. No one can now say what the future may bring.

Until recently, all the political leaders of India have demanded at least Dominion status, and a year ago, the National Congress resolved to organize a campaign of civil disobedience if this status had not been granted by December 31, 1929. With the approach of the date fixed by this ultimatum, the British Labor government decided that something should be done. Consequently, a few weeks ago it announced that after the Simon report, a round-table conference would be held between the British government and Indian representatives to agree on proposals to be presented by the British government to Parliament as to India's future status. Moreover, on October 31, Lord Irwin declared that "the natural issue of India's constitutional progress . . . is the attainment of Dominion status." The Indian reply to this declaration came in the Delhi Manifesto, signed by the outstanding Nationalist leaders. They expressed their appreciation of the pronouncement, but declared that before entering the proposed round-table conference, Great Britain should grant a general amnesty to political prisoners in India. Moreover, it was their understanding that the purpose of the proposed conference was not to discuss when Dominion status should be established, but "to frame a scheme of Dominion constitution for India." The Labor government was not prepared to meet this latter demand, and the result is that the Indian leaders have been driven to the extreme of demanding complete independence.

Dominion status, or responsible government, which was understood to mean the same thing, had been promised to India many times before Lord Irwin's declaration. When the Labor government again enunciated this promise, without waiting for the long-expected report of the Simon Commission, it was natural for the Indian leaders to believe that steps would immediately be taken to carry this promise into effect. When no such steps were forthcoming, the extremists declared that no faith could be placed in British declarations—that the only salvation for India lies in an appeal to force.

The Indian government for home-rule has not sprung into existence over-night. Despite diversities in caste, language and religion, India has always had a sense of oneness. It has found a basis of unity in a common intellectual heritage. As early as 1906, the All-India National Congress declared for complete Dominion status. This demand grew, until the British government, placed in a critical position by the World War, announced in 1917 that its object was "the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire." Two years later, the Government of India Act was passed,

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providing for the system of "dyarchy." Under this, the Indian provinces were given self-government in regard to certain "transferred" subjects, such as education, but the remaining functions of administration were "reserved" to British authority. In the central government, no effort was made to give the Indians any responsibility for administration, though an Indian legislature was established containing elected majorities in both houses. The governor-general was authorized to break deadlocks by certifying that the passage of desired legislation was necessary.

This dyarchy system was designed as a transitional measure. If the Indians successfully administered the "transferred" subjects, the theory was that they might later be given authority over the reserved subjects, and the principle of responsible government might ultimately be introduced into the central government. It was provided in the Act of 1919 that within ten years, a commission should be appointed to determine whether, as a result of progress under the dyarchy system, the principle of responsible government should be established. But dyarchy proved unsatisfactory to both the English bureaucracy and the Indians. The British declared that the Indian leaders refused to coöperate in giving it a trial, and the Indians declared that, actually, the British authorities kept their hand upon every service and Indian responsibility was only nominal.

As early as 1921, the Indian Legislative Assembly made known its desire that the inquiry as to the working of the reforms be held before 1929. In 1923 and 1924, further resolutions in favor of a revision of the Dyarchy Act were passed. In September, 1925, the Indian Legislature adopted the so-called National Demand asking for responsible government in the provinces, and for Indian control over all central expenditure, with certain exceptions, such as those for foreign debt, which should remain under British control for a term of years. The National Demand also called for a round-table conference between Indian and European representatives to put these principles into effect. When the British government declined to adopt these proposals, the All-India National Congress, the leading political organization in the country, voted in December, 1926, that its members should not accept any office in the government. Since that date, extremism has been growing in India; it has been marked by bomb-throwing and by strikes, and it has met with severe reprisals from the British.

As a result of Indian pressure, the British government announced two years before the final date set in the Dyarchy Act that a commission, headed by Sir John Simon, would be sent to India to study the situation. Despite Indian demands, the Tory government declined to appoint any Indian members to this body. The result was that both extremists and moderates in India denounced the Commission, asserting that the British government, in excluding Indian members, had insulted India's national self-respect. The All-India Congress passed a resolution asking that the Commission be boycotted. Despite the efforts of Sir John Simon, and latterly of Wedgwood Benn, the Labor government's Secretary for India, the fundamental error in the appointment of the Simon Commission has not been repaired. By that error, any opportunity for a settlement of the Indian question by mutual consent was lost—perhaps irretrievably. Confronted by a hostile Indian opinion, the Simon Commission has conducted its inquiries for about two years, but as yet has made no report.

Had the British government acted more promptly in revising the Act of 1919, had it accepted the round-table proposal several years ago, rather than tardily advancing it today, it is probable that the Indian leaders would be willing to accept Dominion status within a stated term of years. If the Simon Commission has the courage to recommend Dominion status, it may even now be possible to reach agreement, thus averting the outbreak of revolution. The argument is that India is not ready for Dominion status—that it would lead to inefficient administration, a decrease of trade, and even to civil war. Many peoples have paid a price for freedom, and if the Indian people are willing to do so, theirs should be the decision. Mahatma Gandhi recently said that freedom would "mean the more suffering for us. The suffering will do us good—we have deserved it—and I welcome it. In the end, India will be really free, politically and culturally, economically and spiritually." If the Labor government, controlled by fear of hypothetical dangers, should follow a niggardly policy toward India, this vast empire will be irretrevably lost to the British Commonwealth of Nations. If, on the other hand, it shows real generosity in making, not promises but actual concessions to the overwhelming demand for Indian home-rule, it may keep a self-governing India within the Empire, and thus safeguard it from outside molestation. It was Ramsay MacDonald who coined the phrase "risks of peace." Nowhere is it more important, from the standpoint of interracial and international peace, to take a real "risk" than in the case of India.

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# Massachusetts' Great Insurance War

## *How the Private Companies Fought Savings Bank Insurance — and How They Have Lost*

I

STATE-SUPERVISED savings bank life insurance has come of age in Massachusetts—this is the anniversary year—but the private life insurance companies doing business in the Commonwealth are sending no baskets of flowers to the author of the idea. Reasons for their lack of enthusiasm are not hard to find.

Twenty-one years ago the private life companies declared emphatically that the whole scheme was impracticable. Yet it has demonstrated its practicability so thoroughly that more than $68,000,000 of savings bank life insurance is now outstanding in Massachusetts. It is painful to be proved a false prophet. This, however, was not the only awkward mistake made by the private life companies. They insisted that the savings bank insurance idea reposed upon a notion of human nature which was ridiculous; it assumed that people would go looking for life insurance instead of having life insurance go looking for them. How could anyone in his right mind expect anything but disaster from a plan which proposed to dispense with insurance agents and their commissions, and to sell life insurance over the counter of the village savings bank without the aid of high-powered salesmen to tell the public about it? What, demanded the vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company—who made a special trip from New York to set the Massachusetts Legislature right on the matter—what would induce people to buy such insurance?

Common sense, suggested the author of the plan—a persistent, disconcertingly reasonable lawyer named Brandeis—Louis D. Brandeis, whose devotion to social progress had lately caused misgivings on Beacon Street. Common sense! The insurance lobby gathered on Beacon Hill smiled a substantial smile.

But the 84,000 policies issued by Massachusetts savings banks during the past twenty-one years were sold without the persuasive plea of a single commissioned agent. The idea born in the brain of Louis D. Brandeis has now gathered vast momentum. Having discovered that straight life policies, limited-payment life policies, endowment policies and five-year term policies could be purchased under the savings bank life insurance plan at an average of 26 percent below the cost in private life companies, the public proved that common sense exists, after all.

The banks will not touch it, argued the insurance interests, turning over a thought in the back of their minds. Again they were wrong, though for several years it looked as if they might be right. For, months after the plan became a permissive law, no savings bank would touch it. Mysterious forces were at work throughout the state to prevent savings bank insurance from surviving birth. Yet, during the past summer, ten savings banks in the state were conducting licensed business in the sale of savings bank insurance. And nearly a hundred other banks had found it profitable to accept agencies for such sale.

As if to emphasize the changed attitude of Massachusetts banks today, the twenty-first anniversary of the plan has been marked by entrance into it of three more banks, one of which, the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, is the largest institution of its kind in New England. On November 1, these three new members of the state-supervised savings bank insurance plan issued new policies to the value of no less than $240,000.

Even the final argument put forth by the private life companies against the Brandeis idea has turned into a boomerang. You are proposing, they said, to write industrial insurance: the kind that will help ordinary working men and women. It is dangerous to undertake that with units as small as village banks. It is a type of insurance in which the percentage of lapsed policies is tremendous and the cost is heavy. Do you wish to drive your savings banks on the rocks?

But, in the fiscal year just ended, only 1.05 percent of the savings bank life insurance policies issued in Massachusetts have lapsed. What of the private companies meanwhile? In 1928 the average lapse ratio on policies written by these companies in Massachusetts, in their weekly premium departments (industrial insurance), was 59.59 percent of the number of policies written during the year. Their ten-year average of lapsed policies of this type has been 52.66 percent of all written. These are facts of record at the State House.

The coolness of the life insurance companies in Massachusetts toward the coming of age of savings bank insurance is not very difficult to understand.

II

The story of the Massachusetts plan for savings bank insurance begins at the time of the great insurance scandals in New York City, when Mr. Charles Evans Hughes was rising to sudden promi-

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nence as counsel for the Armstrong Committee. Disturbed by the discoveries of this committee, New England policy holders of the Equitable Life Assurance Society retained Mr. Louis D. Brandeis (now Associate Justice of the Supreme Court) to protect their interests.

As he explored the situation, Mr. Brandeis was struck not so much by the terrible abuses of the system as by the colossal wastefulness of it all. He discovered two major causes for this utterly uneconomic state of affairs: inflated agents' commissions, which piled up huge bills of costs to policy buyers, and over-persuasion of customers, which induced many to take out policies the premiums on which they were unable to carry. Almost total loss to the buyer was the result in the latter case, since lapsed weekly premium policies had no cash surrender value whatever till they had run several years. Every evil which had grown up in the business of inadequately regulated commercial life insurance was carried to exaggeration in these industrial policies: premiums were twice as high, expense ratios were huge, and the ratio of lapses was staggering.

After he had analyzed the language of the business, Mr. Brandeis decided that life insurance had been dressed up with phrases to hide the essential simplicity of the idea behind it. That idea was to make a safe and profitable investment of money. Aside from investing money received, there was little in the elaborate technical jargon which anyone could not master with a little experience. Make it possible for savings banks to obtain expert actuarial service in the working out of rates to be charged; provide means whereby they might obtain medical direction for examining clients; and the insurance idea was absolutely identical with the idea of a savings bank!

He concluded that if savings banks were given an opportunity to write life insurance policies as part of their business, they could write these more cheaply than private companies, saving the enormous sums spent on solicitation and eliminating over-persuasion by agents. Finally, this idea would retain management of Massachusetts money in Massachusetts, instead of permitting the state to be drained of valuable quick capital badly needed for local development. Only one-fourth of the life insurance companies doing business in the state were chartered there; three-fourths of them were outside companies. Every year, these outside companies were collecting millions of dollars, which were drawn out of the state to swell their reserves; and the companies invested these huge sums as they saw fit—elsewhere. If savings banks sold life insurance, this money would be available for local development, under the rigorous savings bank investment laws of the Commonwealth.

It was characteristic of Mr. Brandeis' vision that he observed this universally neglected fact and foresaw its implications nearly a generation ago. How pertinent was the observation, may be seen from the statistics revealing the flow of local money to outside companies between 1917 and 1927. During that ten-year period, Massachusetts policy holders turned over to outside management no less than $650,921,129 of their own money. The same companies in 1928 collected an additional $107,951,224. Mr. Brandeis felt that a halt should be called, not only in the interest of individual policy holders, but in the interest of the state itself as an economic community. And so, after concluding his work for the Equitable policy holders, he turned to the task of legalizing savings bank insurance. No sooner did news of his purpose filter through financial circles in the Bay State than there began an amazing social, political and economic war.

Every force of political pressure, lobby power, financial resource and Massachusetts reaction was mustering against him when he at last found an independent actuary to assist him with his bill. In the winter of 1907, it was filed with the Legislature. The bill provided that any savings bank in the state, with the approval of both the Bank Commissioner and the Commissioner of Insurance, might acquire a license to operate a department for the sale of savings bank life insurance policies over the counter. Each policy was limited to $500 on any one life in any one bank. When two banks joined the plan, the insured might obtain two policies for $500 apiece, one in each bank. As the number of banks operating insurance departments increased, so would his range of possible protection. (Later the maximum policy was increased to $1,000 for each bank.)

The insurance departments of the savings banks were to employ no solicitors. Only persons resident in the state or regularly employed therein might be insured. Policy holders must share annually in the net profits of the business; legal reserves must meet standard requirements; the mortality experience of all banks operating insurance departments was to be unified at the end of each year. Seven unpaid trustees, appointed by the Governor, were to have administrative control over the system. Only such policies might be written as the state actuary for savings bank life insurance might prepare, and only at rates fixed by him. He was to be employed by the state, and savings and insurance banks were to have no jurisdiction over him whatsoever. The insurance departments of the banks were to be under the joint supervision of the Commissioner of Insurance and the Commissioner of Banks—both state officials. All life and endowment policies were to guarantee to the policy holder a cash surrender value after premiums had been paid for six months.

The basic idea of the Brandeis plan is an assumption that the cost of providing for death and old age is a charge on youth, which should be recognized as fixed on current wages. The state was not to go into the insurance business; that was left to the savings banks as a function properly their own. State participation was limited to the super-

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vision and administrative control required in the interest of low cost and of uniformity of procedure throughout the Commonwealth.

The atmosphere into which this fledgling bill emerged was decidedly chilly. The recess committee to which it was first submitted had fifteen members, and of these fourteen, at first, were hostile. To insure its defeat, the life insurance companies, on New Year's Day, launched a counter-offensive by offering a slight liberalization of their policies. Their idea was to weaken their opponent's case in advance. He replied by buckling on his armor and mustering a small group of friends for the battle.

The crusaders flitted all over the state, spoke before boards of trade and chambers of commerce, women's clubs and economic clubs, labor organizations, welfare meetings and charity conferences. They stirred up public opinion with joint debates and written articles. Interest became so general that, to the dismayed astonishment of the insurance lobby, the bill passed the recess committee by a unanimous vote.

This was but the first skirmish in the campaign. The foes of the plan had admittedly found it difficult to manage the recess committee of fifteen, standing out in the public eye. Handling the Legislature was a different matter. Haley Fiske, Vice-president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, was brought from New York to head the attack in the "Great and General Court." Mr. Brandeis answered him, meeting one argument after another with an amiability, a fund of humor, a flashing wit and a wealth of material fact which dismayed the insurance lobby. Reporters crowded the Legislature. A Savings Bank Insurance League was formed and every few days it issued bulletins. Public men bombarded Beacon Hill with letters. Finally, President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard descended into the arena and won a victory over the conservatives by a tremendous attack on the wastes and abuses of private life insurance. In June, 1907, the Brandeis plan became law.

## III

The seven-months' war was at an end, but the twenty-years' war was beginning. When, backed by their newly acquired legislative authority, the savings bank insurance supporters turned to look for some savings bank willing to pioneer in the experiment, they found the doors of all closed against them. Every avenue was blocked. That the insurance interests were largely responsible for this, there is little doubt, though many savings banks shied from the plan simply because it was new. But the insurance ring in Massachusetts had overplayed its hand. Such stone-wall resistance began to annoy and finally to exasperate the manufacturers of the state, who saw in savings bank insurance possible benefits for themselves and their employees. The plan promised to stabilize employment and encourage thrift. In the town of Whitman, the Commonwealth Shoe and Leather Company was a very important industry; and the head of this company, Mr. Charles H. Jones, believed in the Brandeis plan. This influence prevailed upon the local savings bank. Mr. Brandeis and a few friends put up sufficient money to cover the initial guarantees necessary for opening a life insurance department, and the Whitman Savings Bank became the first in the world to handle savings bank life insurance.

The next year, former Governor W. L. Douglas cast the power of the W. L. Douglas Shoe Company, of Brockton, into the scales against the private life company opposition. The People's Savings Bank of Brockton joined the plan.

The private life companies faced a leak in their dyke of opposition. Compelled to cut their rates some $2,000,000 a year for the benefit of their policy holders, driven to further concessions in liberalizing their policies, they were in no amiable mood. During the twenty-five years that preceded the enactment of the savings bank insurance law, they had never increased the benefits to their policy holders in the weekly premium departments. Several times, indeed, existing benefits had been decreased. Insurance officials declared under oath that these policies could not be liberalized. The concessions forced by competition through the savings bank insurance plan represent today a savings to Massachusetts people of about $11,000,000 a year.

When Mr. Brandeis, in 1910, was drawn to Washington by his professional work, the destiny of the plan was turned over to his private secretary, Miss Alice H. Grady, who has since become Deputy Commissioner of Savings Bank Insurance. The private life companies were exultant. That a resourceful lawyer should have held his own against them was, of course, one of those miracles which prove that miracles are rare. That a mere stenographer-secretary might put them to rout was a preposterous supposition.

First they tightened the blockade on the banks. Between 1912 and 1922, the campaign of influence was so successful that not a single additional savings bank in the state opened an insurance department. With these knots well tied, the insurance forces opened a battle in the state Legislature.

Clouds of statistical misinformation were loosed by experts at the game, to impress lawmakers with the dangers inherent in savings bank insurance. Armed with data gathered from the records of the private life companies themselves, Miss Grady routed the attack. Bill after bill was filed to cripple and ultimately to destroy the savings bank insurance plan. It was proposed to limit the total possible insurance to $2,000 per insured. The Legislature threw the bill out. A bill stipulating a $5,000 limit was advanced. When they saw failure again staring them in the face, the private life insurance interests offered to compromise at $10,000. Their scheme was rejected.

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Swarms of agents descended upon individual legislators in their homes to cajole and threaten. They succeeded only in antagonizing most of them. A bill providing that savings bank life insurance be taxed was introduced in the Legislature. Life insurance companies explained that they had to pay a tax on every policy written, whereas this outrageous plan bore no burden of taxation and was fed by appropriations from the public funds. But the friends of the plan, opening the statutes, pointed out the disconcerting facts. Not only did savings bank life insurance pay taxes; it paid taxes of ½ of 1 percent on total investment, which includes reserve and surplus; whereas private life insurance companies pay but ¼ of 1 percent on their net value (reserve) only. Not a single cent of taxation is levied against their enormous surpluses.

Next, the insurance interests undertook to obtain a law ordering savings banks to pay back in full the total state appropriation each year. This would have doomed the plan in its early years, when earnings were small. Miss Grady and her shock troops repulsed the attack, and then brought about passage of a law directing that savings bank insurance departments were to pay back 25 percent of the money advanced in 1929, 40 percent the next year, 55 percent the next, 70 percent the next, 85 percent the next, and 100 percent in 1934.

This infuriated the foes of the plan to such an extent that they launched their master stroke last March. A mysterious meeting of the Joint Legislative Committee of Ways and Means was called at the State House. On the appointed day, a small army of insurance agents descended upon the Capitol. With them came chief counsel for the John Hancock Life Insurance Company, for the Berkshire Life Insurance Company, for the Massachusetts Mutual, for the New England Mutual and for the State Mutual. The total salaries of these gentlemen amount to more than $85,000 a year.

By accident, at the last moment, the friends of savings bank life insurance got wind of the party. Even then, the secret was so well kept that nobody outside the insurance ring knew what was coming, until Mr. Guy Cox, general counsel for the John Hancock company, rose and offered an amendment to a financial bill pending in the lower house. The proposed amendment provided that on and after 1934 all connection between the state and savings bank life insurance should terminate, all state offices in the Division of Savings Bank Insurance should end, and that the control of the plan should thereafter be vested solely in the banks themselves. The carefully mustered audience burst into applause as each of the high-salaried attorneys for the life insurance companies spoke. This irritated the Committee. The learned counsel were asked, "Who mustered the claque?" and "What are you afraid of?"

"We are not afraid of savings bank insurance, nor are we afraid of this Committee," exploded Mr. Cox.

"Neither is this Committee afraid of the insurance lobby," replied the chairman. Which exchange, duly blazoned in the press, ended the twenty-years' war—for one year more.

## IV

Steady growth has been evident in savings bank life insurance as an institution. Increasing interest has been shown by city banks in the experience of this institution during its first two decades.

For instance, the Whitman Savings Bank shows a growth of deposits exceeding in percentage almost all other savings banks in the state. The Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, taking an agency for the system, found itself issuing policies for approximately $1,000,000 last year. Not only was the plan proving a good business-getter for savings banks: it was doing something entirely novel in the history of savings bank business. It tended to curtail the heavy flow represented annually by withdrawn deposits, and thus increased the volume of funds available to the banks for profitable investment. One bank in the system reports that 82 percent of the funds deposited within the past three years as life insurance premiums have stuck.

Between August 1, 1928, and July 31, 1929, the ten banks in the plan, together with agency banks, coöperating industries and other agencies, issued 14,510 new policies valued at $12,410,352. Dividends to policy holders during the twenty-one-year period exceed $3,200,000; for 1929 they are $672,000. Dividends have been paid every year to date, the buyer of an early policy receiving last year approximately 62 percent of his annual premium.

Admitted assets of the plan in 1908 were but $26,048; today they exceed $8,000,000. Premium income in 1908 was $368.21; on December 31, 1928, it approximated $1,900,000—about 1.27 percent of all life insurance premiums paid in the state for the year. Far from preventing growth of private insurance business, the plan has actually benefited it.

The time is rapidly approaching when the state will contribute nothing to savings bank insurance. The fiscal year 1929 calls for a state appropriation of $38,000 to cover expenses of supervision. But reimbursements to the state for the year from savings bank life insurance departments will total approximately $15,200, while taxation on their business will bring the state another $13,000. The total cost this year to Massachusetts, for supervision of this $68,000,000 insurance, will be but $9,800.

After considering these facts, the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank decided to enter the plan as a full-fledged member on November 1. Similar decisions were taken by the Lowell Institution for Savings and the Grove Hall Savings Bank of Boston. This is the real anniversary tribute to savings bank insurance on its coming of age.

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The plan functions not only for the benefit of people of moderate means, offering policies with a face value as low as $250; it is also attracting buyers from the professions and among the wealthy, who are eager to avail themselves of the opportunity of saving 26 percent in buying life insurance. Thirteen thousand dollars may now be written on a single life. The idea has come to stay. It is a living monument to the vision, sagacity and courageous public spirit of Louis D. Brandeis.

JAMES H. POWERS.

# The Booby Prizes for 1929

THE Committee on Awards for the Phoebe Moron Foundation regrets the slight delay that has occurred in announcing the Booby Prizes for 1929. In view of the number of entrants, however, and the particularly high standards of folly and stupidity that were achieved by many of the candidates, the final choices were not easy ones. The closeness of the various rivals and the delicacy of making a decision have persuaded the judges to divide up the prizes in certain departments. Where this has been done, the usual prize of a 1935 automobile, equipped with the latest model of a Winged Victory, a pink toilet set, a combination coffee percolator and electric toaster, and a perfume exhaust, will give place to a choice of the following: Ten shares of a defunct oil stock, a free membership in the National Security League, or an autographed photo of Mr. William B. Shearer (vest-pocket size).

In Statesmanship, at the risk of appearing to conflict with the Nobel bequest, the grand award was unanimously divided among the presidents, prime ministers, kings, dictators and rear admirals who have, during the past decade, erected this final monument of peace: the Kellogg treaties; the curtailment of battleships and the multiplication of cruisers, airplane carriers and bombing planes; the extension of imperialistic interests in the Caribbean, the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia and North Africa; the prayers of the Archbishop of Canterbury; the perfection of annihilating gases and the legal abolition of mustard gas, the least deadly of weapons; the compulsory submission of all justiciable disputes to the World Court and the emphasis on non-justiciable disputes like that over freedom of the seas during that next war which the Kellogg Peace Pact has so effectively abolished. While this great work is not, of course, the achievement of a single year, the committee feels that it reached a consummation during 1929.

The prize for Good Will Envoy has been bestowed upon Mr. St. John Ervine for his monumental researches into drama and social life in the United States, a work whose scholarship, tact and sympathetic understanding of the material will rank as one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century criticism. One hesitates to compare this work with Motley's history of the Netherlands; but it undoubtedly takes rank with our own Samuel Clemens' fine portrayal of English feudalism in the Court of King Arthur. Honorable mention is herewith accorded to Mr. J. C. Squire and an editorial writer in The New York Times, whose comments upon recent German war books have a distinguished self-righteousness and boorish ineptitude not attained in either America or England since the official bureaus of war information were dismantled.

The award for Business Acumen must be divided *pro rata* among all the careful investors who sold fully owned good securities in order to cover stocks they continued to hold on margin in a falling market. This entitles each financial genius to .000023 shares of a defunct oil corporation. Certain outstanding business leaders deserve, however, a word of separate mention: among them, Messrs. Chrysler and Chanin for their happy attempt to create such a degree of congestion in the Grand Central district as to make movement in any direction impossible, and Mr. Alfred E. Smith for his modest effort to capitalize his connection with a former firm, the Empire State, Ltd., in an office building which will add a few knots to the snarl of traffic and subway transportation in the Thirty-fourth Street district. The provision of a resting place for migratory birds, wisely concealed in the architect's plans as a mooring mast for dirigibles, is worthy of the great humanitarian who has sponsored this project.

The prize in City Planning for 1929 falls to Mr. Arthur Brisbane for his demonstration that the modern metropolis, so far from being strangled by the reckless building of skyscrapers, is actually benefited by their multiplication. Mr. Brisbane's interest in metropolitan real estate is not thought by the Committee to take away from the originality of his discovery. Mr. Harvey Wiley Corbett deserves special mention for repeating his masterly analysis of the way in which skyscrapers decrease transportation congestion.

An antique blue ribbon, dating from the Madison Square Garden Poultry Show of 1904, specially donated for meritorious work in the encouragement of the American artist, goes to the Theater Guild in recognition of its continued production of the plays of Bernard Shaw and Ferenc Molnar. The Committee feels sure that both the playwrights and

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the Guild, despite the apparent apathy of the public, will eventually be rewarded for their high-minded perseverance in a more substantial manner.

In Architecture, the Phoebe Moron judges discarded the claims of many notable rivals in favor of the one outstanding triumph of the century, the New York Central Building, and they voted to bestow this prize automatically on the same building as long as it is in existence. Very honorable mention, nevertheless, is given to the fake modernism of the Chrysler Building; while in the realm of interior decoration and furniture, the prize goes again to the Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers for their admirable period reproduction of *l'Art Moderne* in Paris, 1925.

The most useful invention of 1929 presented a very knotty problem to the judges. They decided to divide the award between the inventor of the contraption for keeping paper cigarette packages from crushing, and the designer of longer skirts for women. The latter invention, while not involving any new mechanical or scientific principles, nevertheless seemed to the Committee to represent the modern application of imagination to technical problems, since this simple device, so far from doing away with labor, has restored and resuscitated the silk industry, the dry cleaners, the corset-makers and the accident-insurance writers.

In Pure Economics, the prize is bestowed unhesitatingly upon American Publishers, Inc., a vertical trust whose financial organization was so consummately handled by Bullion, Mead and Company. This new corporation took charge of the chaos that has surrounded the publication and sale of books in America, and by combining the hitherto separate departments of production and reviewing in a single organization, whereby the reviewers are paid directly by the publishers, instead of in the unsatisfactory, roundabout method heretofore prevailing, has insured the continuous large-scale production of literary masterpieces. The Committee feels that the beneficial effects of such a unified organization will be felt in every department of the arts; and although no special award can be given for notable achievements in publicity, since, in past years, the concentration of prizes in this department introduced an element of unfair competition, honorable mention in Pure Economics is herewith accorded to the group of reviewers and critics who have given modern mass-production methods in the arts the notable slogan: America's Creative Renaissance.

The most distinguished personality of the year was relatively easier to pick than some of the other awards. The first prize is tendered to the now anonymous stowaway who stole an airplane trip from America to France: his modesty and self-effacement were conspicuous, even in a world that contains motion-picture actors and esthetic dancers. Two old prize winners, Mr. Calvin Coolidge and Mr. Benito Mussolini, receive only honorable mention for 1929; but a special prize has been created for General Primo de Rivera, who has uniquely combined Mr. Mussolini's exquisite and almost life-like imitation of a Strong Man with Mr. Coolidge's special creation, that of being a complete nonentity.

The prizes in Applied Logic were divided equally among the following:

Mr. Henry Ford for his combination of flivver production and factory rationalization with an interest in the one-horse shay, the schoolhouse that sheltered Little Mary, the Wayside Inn and the tunes that Grandmother used to sing; the Committee on Regional Plan for New York and Environs for its admirable demonstration that by providing for a population of 20,000,000 in the New York area, the problems of transportation which are now insoluble would become less so, and park areas and playgrounds, which are now non-existent or impossible to reach, would then be more numerous and easier to reach; President Hoover for his prompt counsel in the business crisis that it was necessary to increase the buying power of the country and not to raise the wages of labor; and finally, to the Elder Statesmen of the Great Nations for their efforts to create peace by building all their war equipment to the maximum permitted by their domestic finances and their hope of filching something from their neighbor. This latter item gives certain statesmen a two-fold award, since they have already received first prize under Statesmanship; but the Committee feels that genius should be recognized, even if it appears in more than one department.

This concludes the awards of Booby Prizes for 1929, provided by the Phoebe Moron Foundation. The Committee wishes to thank the public for its sincere collaboration in its enterprise, its many helpful suggestions, and above all for creating the right atmosphere for the encouragement of stupidity and folly and the attainment of its maximum growth. Without the public's sincere coöperation, the list would indeed have been a poorer one. No one can feel any fears for Western civilization, so long as each citizen continues to contribute his quota, great or little.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

## My Heart is Poor Now

My heart is poor now that went clad in gold,
Red metal of delight and all bright pain;
Loveliness is not one to come again,
Nor peace a garment to keep out the cold.
I would that love had died, and not become
This haunting tenderness that brings again
A still belovéd ghost, an old refrain,
Remembered laughter in an empty room.

In that green garden where I walked before,
Hand in your hand, I see long winds have blown
The paths, and rust has shut the unlocked door.
I know now there is left of love alone
A memory, still beating; nothing more.
The quiet of your hands has turned to stone.

DOROTHEA MATTHEWS.

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# Conrad After Five Years

THOUGH the customary bows are still made in his direction, and the several collections of his letters have been reviewed with suitable solemnity, one feels, without being able to adduce any great body of evidence, that Joseph Conrad's reputation is shrinking. Many of the critics whose praise nourished his fame on these shores have little to say about him today, while for the younger literati he appears never to have existed. His imitators seem, on the one hand, to have less and less intrinsic importance, and, on the other, to display less and less insight into his characteristic virtues. At almost any moment now some young iconoclast, to his own satisfaction and with the approval of his fellows, will administer the *coup-de-grâce* to the Conrad myth.

Such a cooling of ardor is customary in an era when masterpieces are discovered each week, and might have been foreseen, especially in the case of an author who had been chiefly hailed for the wrong reasons. With some exceptions, the critics praised Conrad, up to the time of his death, as a spinner of romances, who could create the atmosphere of faraway lands and tell a thrilling tale of adventure.

Besides disappointing many readers, who discovered that Conrad was incredibly long-winded, indirect, and generally unsatisfactory as a writer of adventure stories, the circulation of these critical views has had the disadvantage of obscuring Conrad's real value. Primarily he is, of course, what must be called a philosophical novelist; that is to say, he is a writer who offers us an inclusive and integrated imaginative view of life. Though he stands at a considerable distance from all his contemporaries, he is nearest to Thomas Hardy; and he is a very long way from Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy and the other sociological novelists.

Conrad's philosophy is, as anyone who has thought about it recognizes, pessimistic. In all his novels, from "Almayer's Folly" to "Suspense," is the sense of a universe not so much deliberately malicious as treacherous and alarming. And yet, so restrained is this pessimism in the novels, so completely implicit, that one might sometimes wonder how far Conrad himself was articulately conscious of it. On this point his letters set doubt aside. "If," he wrote Cunninghame Graham, "this miserable planet had perception, a soul, a heart, it would burst with indignation or fly to pieces with sheer pity." "The fate of a humanity condemned ultimately to perish from cold," he wrote in 1898, "is not worth troubling about." And he added, "The ardor for reform, improvement, for knowledge and even for beauty is a vain sticking-up for appearances, as though one were anxious about the cut of one's clothes in a community of blind men." Again, he remarked, "What makes mankind tragic is not that they are the victims of Nature, it is that they are conscious of it"—a sentiment which recalls the lines of his more outspokenly pessimistic contemporary:

> But O, the intolerable antilogy
> Of making figments feel!

Linked with this pessimism is Conrad's admiration for the heroic virtues, for courage and loyalty. In the face of an indifferent universe he does not yield to despair, nor does he recommend the cultivation of a stoic disinterestedness. Far from believing that intelligence can achieve the mastery of natural forces, he held that the development of the intellectual powers thwarts the growth of the qualities which alone bring victory in the struggle of life. That is why most of his heroes are rather stupid, why Axel Heyst has to abandon his philosophy of dispassionate intellectuality, why Jim is sound in his obsession with his disgrace.

This philosophy is a partial explanation also of Conrad's choice of subject matter. Mr. Ford Madox Ford has deplored Conrad's concern with the sea, and has regretted the failure of influential friends, such as Edward Garnett, to advise him to deal with the problems of men and women in our industrial civilization. Mr. Ford may be right; we may have lost much because Conrad did not occupy himself with more representative themes; he might have stood above the contemporary realists, "the period novelists" as Edwin Muir calls them, by as much as he stands above contemporary romanticists. But the uncertainty of that conclusion is pointed to not merely by the quality of such stories as he did write about life in England and on the Continent, but also by the fact that the ways of seafaring men matched so perfectly the problems of expression and adaptation raised by his view of life.

It is curious how thoroughgoing the parallel is between the sea and the universe as Conrad looks upon them. There are passages in Conrad, notably in "Youth," in which the romanticist, gaining the upper hand, leads him into rhapsody on the glories of the seaman's career; but even in such passages the sea itself is grim and pitiless, and there are other descriptions which unsparingly portray the inscrutable terror of the ocean.

> As if it were too great, too mighty for common virtues, the ocean [he writes] has no compassion, no faith, no law, no memory. Its fickleness is to be held true to men's purposes only by an undaunted resolution and by a sleepless, armed, jealous vigilance, in which, perhaps, there has always been more hate than love.

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So also it is with the world, which has no concern with our carefully computed hierarchies of values, and in which we survive, if we survive at all, only by heroic struggle. There is, Conrad believes, as little place in this world for the paralyzing touch of cold reason as there would be room in a ship's crew for a typical academic philosopher. In describing his own art, Conrad remarked that success comes only to the fortunate and deserving. The phrase, a key to all his work, applies equally well to the captain of a ship, who cannot be sure of gaining port whatever his efforts, but is certainly lost if for a moment those efforts are abated. To be deserving, of course, is to be faithful, brave, honest, persevering. If one has these qualities, and if fortune makes the sea smooth, such success as this life holds may be achieved; and if one has these qualities, even if fortune does fail, there is the inner victory—the victory of Heyst in the flames, of Jim on Patusan, of Peyrol in his tartane.

Although it is in this philosophy and this moral code that any discussion of Conrad's place in literature must center, there are other questions to be asked and answered. There is, for example, Conrad's method of construction, his Jamesian doublings and redoublings, his introduction of this person and that to aid in the telling of the story. Mr. Mencken has pointed out that this method, relieving Conrad from the obligations of omniscience, increases the realism of his pictures. It might also be discovered that Conrad, always seeing his subject from many sides, found the task of selection simplified by assuming the point of view of an imaginary character. At the very least, the method of narration makes it clear that Conrad focused his imagination on the problem of bringing out the moral values involved, not on the problem of thrilling the reader. The style raises further questions. Beautifully effective at times, it carries a sense of strain, of ceaseless effort, quite unlike the feeling of unlimited resources conveyed by the great masters. But here again, though we recognize this quality as one more evidence that Conrad falls something short of the first rank, we perceive that the strain and pressure in the writing correspond to the unremitting struggle that dominates the lives of the characters.

In the end, then, we come back to the philosophy, not as philosophy, but as a way of looking at life that lends itself to the creative function. So far as the current depreciation of Conrad is not the result of misunderstanding, it comes from the belief that his subject matter is without a true significance. In the general reëstimation of the middle generation he has suffered the fate of his contemporaries, but for different reasons. Galsworthy, Bennett and Wells, recent criticism tends to assert, derive such importance as they have from non-esthetic elements in their work; they have performed the task of the sociologist, the journalist or the reformer, not the proper task of the novelist. Against Conrad, the charge is that he is a romanticist in the more profound sense; that is to say, a man who, instead of occupying himself with what is central in our civilization, chooses subjects on the periphery of normal experience.

Conrad's code, obviously, does not please the modern taste. It is too simple for the sophisticates, too barbaric for the humanists, and not barbaric enough for the new primitivists. It makes him indifferent to the kind of problems with which most of us are concerned, and it leads him to omit from his novels the kinds of characters which are most representative of our civilization. Our culture is founded on the work of science; it gives highest praise to the cool, rational experimentalist. Conrad portrays the man of intellect only to show his weaknesses, as he shows the weaknesses of Axel Heyst and D'Alacer. "The habit of profound reflection," he comments, "is the most pernicious of all the habits formed by civilized man." In the same manner, he ignores the modern woman; always weak in the portrayal of female characters, he attains moderate success only with the more primitive types. His choice of characters permits him to ignore the involved situations in the relations of the sexes which are so extremely interesting to the present generation of writers. Toward questions of social reform his attitude is neither that of his sociologically-minded contemporaries nor that of the modern sophisticates. The anarchist, as Conrad reveals him in "The Secret Agent," and various short stories, is the welcher, the man who refuses to accept the consequences of living in the difficult world in which we find ourselves; he occupies the same contemptible position in the world of courageous effort that Donkin occupied on board the "Narcissus."

Conrad seems quite out of touch. He apparently fails to be representative either in the inclusive manner of the great writers or in the more specific, localized manner of his contemporaries. Yet there is a sense in which Conrad's themes are at the center of human experience, and this becomes apparent when he is studied in comparison with those critics who most vigorously deplore the eccentricity of the romanticists. Professor Babbitt and his followers insist on the recognition of a fundamental dualism, on discrimination between the law for man and the law for thing. Conrad agrees with them: he believes that, in the face of an indifferent universe, all we can do is cultivate the specifically human virtues. Babbitt holds, furthermore, that the characteristically human qualities derive from the will; so, obviously, does Conrad. Babbitt argues that the animal instincts must be held in check by the human will—the superrational will, as he calls it. Conrad believes that the cowardice and laziness of the natural man can be subdued only by the exercise of a will directed toward courage and loyalty. Babbitt appeals to history and experience to sanction his selection of the peculiarly human qualities; Conrad

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relies on experience but might equally well, if he had been a philosopher instead of a novelist, have appealed to history for support.

Such similarity in assumptions and methods arrives, however, at very dissimilar results. Where Babbitt's virtues depend on intelligence, even though he places intelligence in a secondary position, Conrad's virtues rely on the elimination of reflection. Where Babbitt's creed is adapted only to the cultivated minority, Conrad's meets the needs of the masses of the thoughtless and simple-minded. Where Babbitt's dogmas spring from the written words of countless philosophers, Conrad's, though their history is quite as long and quite as honorable, grow out of the daily actions of the inarticulate.

Neither code, it may be said, recognizes the peculiar elements in the modern situation; to both men, it appears, the development of the past few centuries seems irrelevant. Neither philosophy, moreover, convincingly defends either its assumption of dualism or its view of the will. But it is not the purpose of this essay to analyze either the code of humanism or the code of Joseph Conrad. It is enough to demonstrate that Conrad is not the centrifugal writer that criticism commonly makes him out to be. He does, in a perfectly defensible way, deal with central elements in human experience. On the level to which he lifts them, the sufferings of a ship's crew rounding the Cape or the struggles of a band of white men in the Malaysian archipelago are as representative of normal human experience as anything that could happen in London or Leningrad. From his point of view such deeds are more representative than discussions over teacups, or intricate analyses of the psychological elements in the sex act. In human affairs the intellect has, after all, figured briefly, and its importance is disputable; the heroic emotions, it may be reasonably argued, have had far more to do with the creation of whatever civilization we have.

It is idle to deny that Conrad's outlook is partial, limited. It would be foolish to suggest that more novelists should share his point of view, or that Virginia Woolf and James Joyce would be greater writers if they turned to the portrayal of simple souls on foreign shores. That is not, of course, the point. For the most part, and with very few exceptions in the whole history of literature, we have to accept writers who are excellent only within limitations. We are not so rich in geniuses of universal scope that we can afford to disregard an author who has done well any one thing worth doing.

Conrad's philosophy is empirically justified because he was able to make it the starting-point from which his imagination set out in the creation of living men and women. It is also justified, as has been shown, by certain aspects of history and certain types of experience. It is not, moreover, to be disposed of as merely fashionable; it has always appealed to some people, and there is no reason to suppose that it will ever be without appeal. In other words, it is one of those ways of looking at life which, while admittedly partial, has a degree of validity. That is why, despite the current depreciation, Conrad has better chances of survival than almost any other writer of his period. Though he fell short of the first rank, he rose well above the level of the temporarily popular. He may be of little value, fifty years from now, to the antiquarian, but there are very likely to be some people who will read him because he has a modicum of truth to convey to them concerning the human spirit.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

# Washington Notes

GETTING away from these large international, economic and social questions with which statesmen in Washington sweat and strain, and of which the "ambassadors of the people" (as some of the newspaper correspondents modestly refer to themselves) so profoundly write, and coming down to plain, practical domestic politics, the character of the 1930 Congressional campaign can be much more clearly seen now than a month or so ago. For one thing it seems reasonably certain that there will be no national issue in the fight, nothing upon which the two parties, or the three parties, if the Progressives are counted, will sharply divide. There was some expectation, for a while, that the tariff would provide a campaign battle cry for the Democrats and the Progressives, that the iniquities of the Hawley-Smoot bill would cause a popular revolt comparable to the one that occurred in 1910 when the Payne-Aldrich bill resulted in an overturn of the House Republican majority and the putting of Mr. Taft and his party in a hole from which they could not climb out. Had the Hawley-Smoot bill in its pristine form gone through and been signed by the efficient Herbert under something like the same sort of party pressure that was exerted upon the unfortunate Taft, it is possible the revolt would have occurred. However, the Progressive-Democratic coalition itself has averted this administration danger. By seizing control of the Senate, it utterly routed the Old Guard tariff makers, smashed the Republican Senate machine, and has rewritten the bill so completely that it is generally conceded that if and when it is finally enacted, there will be little chance of creating any considerable popular resentment about rates. In brief, the bill will be a defendable measure for which both the Hoover administration and the anti-Hoover coalition will claim credit, and the single element most deeply disgusted will be the Reed-Grundy-Smoot-Bingham-Moses-Watson group, which so gaily started out to put through a general revision-upwards bill, and so ridiculously failed.

Nor will it be possible to make either prohibition or World Court a nation-wide issue in the fall campaign. So far as the first is concerned, despite the spasmodic bellowing of the extreme drys every time a member of the Hoover Commission opens his mouth on the one side, and the violent sniping of the Anti-Prohibition Association on the other, it is quite evident, first, that Mr. Hoover does not propose to hurry his Crime Commission, and second, that the Crime Commission does not propose to hurry. The

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chances are, I am told, there will be no report from the Commission before next December, but even if one comes within the next six months, I do not believe it will have any effect upon the fall campaign or be of a character to raise the public temperature. I do not mean by this that it will be a mediocre and meaningless report. The pressure of Mr. Pound and Mr. Baker on the Commission are a sufficient guarantee of an able presentation that will perhaps clarify the minds of those not violently prejudiced (if there are any such) one way or the other on this, our greatest controversial question. It will not, however, make a 1930 issue, and I doubt very much that it will make an issue for 1932.

As for the World Court, it seems to be accepted that Mr. Hoover has no intention of sending that proposal with the Root formula to the Senate until after the London Conference has adjourned. By some of his friends he is being advised, and by certain Republican Senators who come up for reëlection this year he is being pleaded with not to precipitate that fight until the beginning of the next short session—in other words, until after the November elections. I do not know whether he will consent to this long delay or not—I should guess probably not—but whether he does or does not, there is no way to make the Court an issue in the Congressional fights. The Hearst press, directed and inspired by Brother Brisbane, will of course try to make it an issue, but I think without any success at all. In Illinois it will be more talked of than anywhere else, because in Chicago the vehemence of the Hearstian organ in its anti-Court crusading is over-matched by that model and modest champion of the people's rights, The Chicago Tribune. But even there the popular pulse will not be greatly stirred, for the reason that, outside of the newspaper offices and the little group of die-hards in the Senate, there is no genuine heat on the subject—certainly none upon the part of the politicians, who there even more than in most states are absorbingly concerned with holding on to the jobs they have until they can get the ones they want. That is, of course, the primary passion of politicians everywhere, but nowhere more conspicuously and completely than in Illinois—and this goes for the charming lady who is running so hard and fast against the timorous Deneen as well as for the rest of them.

The fact is that the elections next fall will be, as they usually are in the off year, local elections decided largely by local conditions and the normal party strength. The effort to give them the national flavor will of course be made. On the Republican side there will be much ballyhooing about "upholding the hands" of the President and supporting "Hoover policies," and on the Democratic side there will be an appeal from the Shouse-Raskob bureau to "rebuke the administration" for "failure to redeem its promises." Both parties will send drum-beating Senators here and there for speaking purposes. Their expenses will be paid, and in most cases they will receive an honorarium from the party treasury ranging from $150 to $500. In some of the Southern states—notably in Alabama and North Carolina—bitterness from the 1928 campaign will play a part. But these things will not amount to much. Local conditions will decide, and the party in power as is customary will get the worst of it. The so-called Republican majority in the Senate will be slightly reduced and the Republican majority in the House—now 105—very much reduced. Regardless of issues or merits or measures, this is the inevitable outcome of the off-year election. With no presidential candidate leading the ticket and no country-wide excitement, the Democratic states that habitually go Republican in a national election will swing back to their party moorings, and the Democratic seats in the House, lost in the Republican 1928 tide, will be largely regained, just as they were in 1926. I should not be surprised to see that 105 majority shrink to 50 or 60—it may even go below 50—but I should be very much surprised under the circumstances to see it wiped out.

The one chance, as I see it, of an upset in House control would be a flat failure of the London Conference combined with a deepening of business depression and a consequent unemployment not possible to ignore or explain. These things unquestionably would create a national issue upon which the Democrats might collect. However, neither one of them is dependable, or even probable. That there will be a battleship agreement at London sufficient to enable the Hoover administration to claim credit for a concrete achievement is hardly open to question. That part of the Conference seems "in the bag," assured not only by the attitude and desire of the British and ourselves but by the practical facts about the Japanese, who are keener for reduction in the big boats than anyone else, willing, if those who are in position to know are not misled, to go to almost any limit. Cruisers and submarines are of course another story. There will be no reduction there, and our cruiser program, in view of the tonnage England insists upon as her minimum, will not be cut at all. Also there will be trouble with the French and the Italians, and probably three or four critical periods when the whole Conference will apparently be on the point of bogging down. Nevertheless, there is complete confidence in medicine-ball circles that the battleship agreement will be real and impressive. Inasmuch as it is in battleships the big money is to be saved, their feeling is that both Mr. Hoover and Mr. MacDonald will get from the Conference, at the least, enough to justify it.

As for business, as has been previously pointed out, should depression become obvious and acute, and should it last through the campaign, the prestige of the Hoover regime would certainly be shot to pieces. It is hard to see how a worse blow could be sustained than that. At this writing the Hoover publicity is all directed toward lauding the masterly and incomparable way in which the Big Executive in the White House met the situation, summoned the leaders of industry to Washington, sent them forth inspired and enthused to change the "psychology of the people" and demonstrate that the grand, consoling and oft-repeated thought about business being "fundamentally sound" is itself fundamentally sound. Further, the Hoover journalistic spokesmen, at properly spaced intervals and in an authoritative way, are telling us over and over that business in the country will be "normal" before June, explaining that what they mean by normal is not merely as good as it was before the stock smash, but with the normal increase in all lines that would have been realized had not progress been so rudely interrupted. Well, all of us hope so—or ought to. At any rate, if things do not

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straighten out and speed up to a noticeable degree during the 1930 year, after the show that has been given, the depression may breed a country-wide discontent that will supplement local issues and prove a Democratic advantage. Some of our most eminent political economists, not wholly removed from the White House atmosphere, are of the opinion that this year and probably next there will be no boom in business, but no damaging slump. The last two years of the Hoover administration they are convinced will be ones of general prosperity and cheerfulness. If they are right—even approximately—this would mean not only that business would be normal, but politics, too. We will have to wait and see, but at this writing there seems to be no reason to alter the above expressed view that the congressional elections will be largely determined by local conditions and that there will be relatively little national politics in them.

So far as I can see, the one local election which will have an undoubted national significance is the gubernatorial contest in the state of New York. Some months back there was considerable talk in Washington to the broad general effect that Governor Roosevelt was not quite "clicking." It was explained that of course he had a tough man to follow in Al, but he was not really registering, that he was spreading himself out a little too thin, trying to please too many elements, wings and groups. There still is this kind of comment to be heard here, but one no longer hears the accompanying suggestion that he will not be reëlected. On the contrary, Democrats from his state who formerly promulgated that idea with a hypocritical show of regret and a request not to say they said so, now regard the Roosevelt reëlection as practically assured. The reason for the change is the badly mired condition of the Republican machine, its obvious inability to develop a popular candidate, and the apparent failure of the White House influence, exerted through the able though not generally liked Mr. Mills, to restore harmony and spirit to a demoralized organization. Here, as the esteemed New York Times has pointed out, is a party in the greatest state of the Union, which cast nearly two and one-half million votes for the last Republican candidate, unable even to talk about anything except an "agreed upon" nominee for governor—"agreed upon" meaning some man selected with White House approval by the Maier-Mills influence. It is an unusual, not to say unpredecented, state of affairs. No wonder the Democratic organization people, although they are not enthusiastic about Governor Roosevelt, who has never really been one of them, consider his reëlection a foregone conclusion.

The national significance comes in the fact that if he is reëlected, there is nothing to do but nominate him for the presidency in 1932, provided his health permits. If reëlected he cannot be pushed aside for Owen Young or anyone else. He will be as much the outstanding Democrat in the party, as much the logical and inevitable nominee, as was Smith after his 1926 victory. Not having the Catholic handicap he will be even more so—and he will be a stronger candidate, though not so exciting a one as the redoubtable Al. In this connection, comment is being made that in the speech made by Governor Roosevelt a few weeks ago at Chicago, he touched upon every conceivable subject of interest to the American people except the one that interests them most—prohibition. It sounded like the speech of a presidential aspirant alive to the lessons of the last presidential election.

T. R. B.

Washington.

# To Wait and See

THE FITNESS of Mr. John Anderson's new book, "Box Office" (Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, New York, $2.50), to the theater at present is one way of indicating what the situation is. The small volume, admirably written, full of right data and special observation, common sense and fairness of mind, provides discussions and information with regard to such worldly and practical aspects of the theater as the manager's office, the road companies, the ticket agents, the actors' agencies, the competition of Hollywood, the chance of the dramatist in this vast melée, long runs, hits, and the great game of the theatrical business, as an enterprise and as a gamble. This is a book full of wise and friendly suggestions, never too abstract and visionary, never extreme; and one that succeeds in doing exactly what it sets out to do.

Ordinarily, reading this book, we should consider how the author of "Box Office" might doubtless be engaged in writing a companion volume, one dealing with the side of the theater that is theoretical, that inquires into the esthetics of the art, that covers certain tendencies and movements technically, that shows the points of departure evinced by the theater of the year, the tensions, qualities, reversions, dilations of mood, treatment and subject matter. But this thought does not even arise in the mind; one feels easily that Mr. Anderson, in writing so well of the subject on which he has written, has covered most of what there is, just now, to cover.

The theater's case stands thus: except for some of the revivals at the Civic Repertory Theater, and here and there among newer and struggling groups, there is not a play of any significance to be seen in town—and these few revivals are not American and, of course, not new; they are familiar pieces, often Russian. The Theater Guild, after a flat season last year, has begun this with two failures, one of them a piece of some significance because of its author, Romain Rolland, but almost impossible for American actors and completely unrealized in the production. The Provincetown Playhouse, after a famous record in the past, of plays, actors, designers, has, concluding thus several seasons of declining fortunes and of subsiding opportunities to discover worthwhile plays, at last thrown up the sponge and closed its doors, not without some unpaid debts. Otherwise, there are some pleasant plays, "Strictly Dishonorable," for example, some plays, a very few, that appear to be one way or another entertaining and one play with a delicate theme and partially realized creation of it, "Berkeley Square." Of musical shows there seem to be a few about which enough people differ in opinion, whether they are bad or good, to keep them in our minds, and which seem to be at least better than nothing. In general, we may say, without the least inch of highbrowdom, that nobody pretends there is any great glamor remaining in the

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theater, and that nobody raves and thrills about the shows to be seen.

On the other hand, there are numerous dancers, and vaudeville and revue moments that are capital. And it is these bright aspects of our American theater that foreign visitors notice. They are struck by the snap, energy, dancing skill, the general expertness, the mechanical proficiency, and the expense of production; and it seems to them that they have found a new, fresh world of theater promise and delight, a gay, fast barbarism into which they escape with pleasure. Nor are they necessarily mistaken.

But, returning for a moment to the serious productions, is there anyone who will claim that the great interest in décor, in scenic designing, in the problems of production, directing, acting, that was so much in the air five or six years ago, exists any longer? To pull a long face about most of the present theater, discussing it solemnly, would only be to show that you are either a dreamer, a fraud or a windbag; and anyone who thinks about the matter at all, must be forced to admire the good spirit with which many a dramatic critic on the newspapers will review a thing that, if it were printed in a book, he would hardly give to his charwoman. There are some good actors still, mostly women, a good many skillful actors in a small way, and a good many young people of talent, but with small chances of ever learning much more than they know now, which is mostly how to make themselves interesting on Broadway. But about actors we need not despair, since acting to a large extent follows the drama that it interprets, and gradually develops itself and finds its style in connection with the plays that arise to be acted. The subject boils down pretty much to the writing of plays.

The general condition of the theater just now is, however, very much what we might have expected. There are some things—and art is the chief of them—that cannot be hustled into being by enterprise, promotion, White House platitudes or local boosting, or patriotic ambition, cannot be bought, faked or mechanically nourished. We have reached in the theater, then, what we might have expected from the trend of our life, and from our system of stars, our costly theater rents with their necessary long runs, our concessions to popular taste and cheap publicity methods, and cheap news, and so on and so on, all of which we all know. There is nothing especially to get excited about—the theater follows the public that it serves—and no reason to say more.

The discussion all turns on one point: if in our popular life there had been any strong and lasting urgency, any passionate matter to express; if there had been pressing ideas to retail, battles of theory to be fought, these practical conditions could not have prevented, though they might have impeded, a drama that would arise in the mere course of things, and our theater would not have got us where we now are. It all works in a vicious circle, therefore; the conditions of the theater, the quality of the public mind and life. And this brings us to a sort of thesis—

What the theaters of the world elsewhere are doing, how far this state of things is going on in other countries, is not our concern for the moment; our own American theater is drifting toward barbarism, barbarism in the sense of being without any central conception of life or society, any consistent point-of-view or order. You may possess any amount of vitality, high color, individual emotions, lively expression, and still have no central conception of human society or of the long line of human life. The theater anywhere arises from, first, energy, and then, after that primary source in energy, from the possession of a point-of-view. We have energy, vitality, and it is only natural that something should be born of that into the theater. We have almost no social point-of-view, and it is only to be expected that in this year of grace we should have no tragic drama that must be, against all odds, written, and no social comedy in which the life depicted is significantly seen against any scale of ideas or conception of society. There may very well be in our American life more individual responsibility than before, but the popular point-of-view is too elementary and single-minded to make much basis for anything beyond simple popular entertainment. Our best work in the theater, therefore, comes immediately out of the popular taste, on which it depends for its support, and derives from the general vitality, from whose springs it draws energy and contagious spirits.

And so it has happened gradually, these last few years, that many people of intelligence and taste have taken less and less stock in the so-called legitimate theater, and turned to its more lively popular arts. I am not speaking of those people who always preferred minstrels and circuses, nor of those, a few years ago, who praised these popular arts extravagantly, scattering about the word *great* as lavishly as stage money. These people of whom I am speaking now do not have to travesty the nature of great art like that. They can see a glittering Charleston dancer, or a Black Bottom performer, or a lively and shrewd wisecracker, or some creature with an amazing rhythm, or some exuberant skit, without feeling obliged to say that this is as great as Nijinsky—Josephine Baker is not to them a great artist, whatever diverting powers she may have—or that this or that is an elaborate technical art. What these people do is to realize that they must tolerate terrible stretches of mere sprightliness or forced animation or banality or maudlin, beloved popular sentimentality, must have their minds insulted and their endurance tried, for the sake of certain moments they can get in which a very real talent appears, a streak of genius, a sweep of inexplicable delight, a sense of genuine creation and abounding life. Hope follows this living pulse and flare. And, sad to say, there is also the likelihood that in the absence of a notable serious art in the theater, one's taste sinks a little, one's mind loses its hunger, while one's power to sit and endure sustained boredom or tepidity, wears thinner and grows less patient.

The more serious theater may revive, with freshened forms, and for its content some sort of high, pressing, simple reality out of American life, or some sustained humorous comment. Or it may not, not for a long time. As for that other side of this theater art, more lively and truly popular, its chances will arise from vitality and speed that are not mere restlessness and exhausted nerves, and from a gay, full, happy temper that is not mechanized and driven into something hard and empty. Its best bet at present may be its barbarism.

STARK YOUNG.

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# Three Concerts

PROFESSOR LEON THEREMIN recently reappeared on the concert platform and made more of his influential, cabalistic gestures to his airphone. He had the support of the Cleveland Orchestra in an amiable suite full of the purple characteristic of the school of Tchaikovsky, and written specially for the R. C. A. Theremin by Joseph Schillinger, authorized representative of the Leningrad Association of Modern Music in Western Europe and America. The occasion could not have been more favorable to a demonstration of the virtues of his instrument. The audience was good-sized, and what American audiences is not interested in technical progress, and in devices containing such beautiful parts as antennae, oscillatory circuits, radiotrons and the rest?

The demonstration was not very impressive, none the less. As in the past, the airphone proved itself of small potential musical worth. Because of the prodigious volume and continuity of tone it produces, a role in the life of the monster crowds of the future may be in store for it. One can readily picture the United Soviets of Boston, say, filling the Fenway and listening to an ether-wave version of the "Sonata Appassionata," beloved of Lenin and the bourgeoisie. But an artistic role seems denied the Theremin, at least in its present form. The tone is so lacking in precision and consistency, and the instrument slurs the melodic intervals so brutally, that the sound is scarcely to be associated with music. A disagreeable vibrato characterized most of its passages. Indeed, the airphone sounded like an inferior cello sloppily played. In the grandiose finale of M. Schillinger's suite, it sounded like a horridly soaring female voice.

After the performance, Professor Theremin asserted that the vibrato tone was called for by the Schillinger score, and that other compositions might produce more precise and consistent sounds. But if this is so, it seems strange that he has not found a chance of producing them himself, or got some young composer to furnish him with a showpiece demonstrating their use.

Pro Musica is a little association describing itself as "the only Society which today introduces the works of living European composers to American audiences and the works of living American composers to European audiences, through the personal medium of the composer himself."

In fact, it has chapters in New York and in a number of middle and far-western cities, which it feeds with musical celebrities in recitals of their own work. It also has a tendency to indulge in a vague use of language, apparent from its first offering this season, the concert of the pieces of M. Alexandre Tansman, at Roerich Hall—

> In climes beyond the solar road
> Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam.

If it be granted for the sake of argument that M. Tansman is living and a European, by what right, none the less, is he to be allowed the style of composer? Supposing he does come to us bound with the myrtles of La Revue Musicale and other powerful European critical gazettes? And supposing that, some years ago, in M. Serge Koussevitzsky's greener time, the Boston Symphony Orchestra did perform one or two of his things? They do not move; and they, and not the foreign reports and Boston Symphony programs, are the indices. There was a whole evening of these works at his concert: sonatas, suites, impromptus, mazurkas, burlesques and dances written between 1919 and the present time; and tones merely spilled, like a little water from an overturned glass. In M. Tansman we seem to have, not a composer, but an improviser. He gives slightly individual turns to his phrases, and his *scherzi* have some originality. But the atmosphere they diffuse is an old one, present in stuffy salons this many a year. Compared with them, the compositions of his compatriot Karol Szymanoski shine like stars of purest ray. No doubt, there is a future for the little *divertissements* presented the other evening. But it would appear to have for its scene the lobbies of fashionable hotels rather more than concert-halls. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped that Pro Musica will either raise the level of its offerings, or describe the nature of its aims and activities in more exact a way.

The League of Composers' audience guffawed roundly at Anton von Webern's symphony for chamber-orchestra, the night of its world-première. The inevitable neurotic titters were drowned by the loud laughs that speak the emptiness within. Musicians on the platform started the outburst by smirking between notes; and had Mr. Alexander Smallens, the conductor, not extended a restraining hand, the assemblage would scarcely have troubled to control itself. Next day, the newspapers played up the event as though it had a significance and a bearing on the merits of the little composition; here the real injury was done, as usual.

The crowd which comes to the League of Composers' concerts is notoriously the least genuine of New York musical audiences. It has a strongly social complexion, which fills the room with the quiver of a superficial awareness and self-consciousness quite unfriendly to concentration. The performance is patently an excuse for its presence, a point of departure. The intermission is the great moment for it; and the end of the program an occasion for ringing up the curtain on the main business of supper, dancing and the convivialities of musicians and their admirers. Its judgments are not to be taken seriously.

Besides, it was evident that the symphony was badly played. Not only did it figure upon a program with two compositions conducted by their composers, which mean that the conductor in charge of it had had to share rehearsals with two other men—rehearsals of a work depending, like all the compositions of the Viennese coterie, upon points most finely drawn! There was no sincerity in the performance. Though written at the invitation of the League of Composers, Webern's symphony was entrusted by it to a conductor and a band which put nothing of themselves into the execution, and scarcely troubled to conceal their contempt of the score.

To be sure, the fragile little piece is unconventional in its form. This is most slender and lightly indicated. The very volumes of the score are made up of the tones of the clarinet, the bass-clarinet, the horns, the harp, the first and

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second violins, and the viola and cello, emitted for the most part singly and separately, in Indian file. There are scarcely any chords. The passages for the *tutti* are instantaneous, and little instrumental polyphony occurs. Indeed, in form the symphony resembles a Cézanne water-color, with its hair-line indications of essential contours. It, too, is complete in itself, but excessively subtle. Still, though the color, melodic line and orchestration were daring, they were not hard to follow. The "Chamber Symphony" is one of Webern's simplest pieces. If it has a defect, it is not that of opacity. It is rather more that of a slightly over-poetical, pre-raphaelite spirit, characteristic of the entire Viennese school, Berg and Webern in particular.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

# *A COMMUNICATION*

## After Mother India

SIR: A volume entitled "After Mother India," written by Harry H. Field, has recently been published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, of New York. I have read through very carefully every page of this new book, and also the book by Miss Mayo herself, which it defends.

In spite of the profession of giving full documentation, the ignorance displayed about India in these books is so crude that one is surprised to find them carrying weight either with the American or British public as serious publications. Unfortunately, the peculiar style of propaganda which they represent seems to captivate a certain type of mind. They offer on the surface a pseudo-scientific appearance by copious quotations from documents which are unknown to the reader and often given without their full context. When analyzed, the scientific side of things breaks to pieces, because there has been no detailed study of the subject such as would correct false and hasty impressions.

To give in some detail one example of misquotation, I had personally assured American readers, in answer to Miss Mayo's attack on the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, that he had probably condemned the evils of child marriage more unsparingly than any other living writer in his own country, and was known publicly throughout the whole of India for his absolute condemnation of that practice. I had also taken the pains to interview Miss Mayo herself, in Mr. Field's presence, and had explained to her the blunder she had made. She expressed regret to me and promised to rectify her mistake. Mr. Field, however, even after this interview, still upholds Miss Mayo's gross misquotation of Tagore in the following words:

> That his championship for this cause, so deeply in need of the support of every prominent Indian, should lie buried in Bengali, hidden from the non-Bengali-speaking Hindu majority, or should be shrouded in an ambiguous phrase, or should be conspicuous only to those familiar with his personal life, is difficult to reconcile with the idea of championship worthy of the name.

Let me take this sentence to pieces:

(1) Mr. Field, as an Englishman, thinks that anything written by the greatest master of Bengali prose and verse, Tagore, "lies buried in Bengali." There is a world of revelation in that one word, "buried." Because Tagore writes in his own language, his thoughts are "buried"! Could the unconscious conceit of the white man go farther than that?

(2) Mr. Field seems to be entirely ignorant of the fact that Tagore's Bengali works have been widely translated into Hindi, and into almost every other Indian vernacular. Therefore, what Tagore publishes in Bengali is by no means "hidden from the non-Bengali-speaking Hindu majority."

(3) Mr. Field states that what Tagore writes on this subject is "shrouded in an ambiguous phrase." This is simply untrue. It runs through all his writings, and is of the same character as his entire social outlook. Tagore has himself encouraged the marriage of his own son to a widow, and condemned caste utterly, root and branch; and furthermore, he has lived in such defiance of caste regulations that many orthodox people refuse still to invite him to take a meal with them. Furthermore, he is carrying on by his own efforts a higher institution for girls, where those who do not wish to marry at too early an age may come and study under his personal guidance and tuition. Though nearly seventy years of age, he still carries on this work. He has devoted the whole of the money which he received from the Nobel Prize for this very purpose. Everyone who knows what is happening in Bengal, and the greater number of educated people outside Bengal, understand this position of Tagore. They regard him as an exponent of reformed Hinduism, holding advanced liberal social doctrines.

(4) Mr. Field regards Tagore's views on child marriage as "conspicuous only to those familiar with his personal life." This sentence, to any one who knows India, is so entirely false that it needs no answer or comment. Tagore's views about the evils of child marriage are as "conspicuous" as Gandhi's. They have been always on the side of reform and are only not "conspicuous" to persons who do not know the country.

I have painfully taken to pieces this one sentence written by Miss Mayo's champion and dealt with it seriatim, because it shows how ignorant people are who either live in India wrapped up in their own surroundings, or else, like Miss Mayo herself, come out to India in order to describe omnisciently the social conditions of three hundred and twenty million people after a stay of a few months.

There is one chapter in this book, called "The Messenger," which has nothing to do with "Mother India" itself, but is a deliberate and provocative attack on Mahatma Gandhi's private character. It charges Mr. Gandhi with offering hush-money on a certain tragic occasion to an American widow in Bombay, whose husband was murdered brutally in a riot in that city. What Mr. Gandhi really did (as I know full well) was to offer to the poor widow compensation as a token of deep regret from the Indian people, who had been intensely shocked by the crime that had been committed. He spoke out at once himself in the plainest possible manner in his own paper, "Young India," about the brutality of the crime and did a public penance for it, news of which was published abroad all over the world. How could he then have offered hush-money? Even in saying so much, I feel guilty of an im-

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pertinence. For the personal character of Mahatma Gandhi needs no defense from me against such an attack based on an affidavit signed many years after the occurrence without any cross-examination or verification.

Surely it is quite time that all this mud-slinging came to an end! Tagore and Gandhi represent the noblest among the saintly characters in India today, and their names have a world reputation which cannot possibly be smirched by writers such as these. Yet, all the same, the harm that has been done to international relations by slanderous books of this character is incalculable. They are increasingly stirring up bitterness against America itself in the hearts of young Indian readers, who find it difficult to discriminate between Miss Mayo and her own fellow countrymen. They lead inevitably to retaliation, and inoculate a new racial poison in the human mind.

New York City. C. F. ANDREWS.

# *CORRESPONDENCE*

## More About the Public Defender

SIR: Governor Roosevelt's recent address before the Columbia University Law School Alumni Association, in which he said that a general impression exists that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor in this country, emphasizes the urgency of the establishment by law of the office of Public Defender to represent accused poor persons. The Governor, at a conference just held with the writer, stated that he is sympathetic to the Public Defender proposal, and that he believes that a Public Defender bill should be passed in this state as an experimental measure, in the hope that such legislation would be as successful in New York as it has been elsewhere in this country.

It is significant, also, that the Institute of Law of Johns Hopkins University is now planning a careful investigation and survey of the defense of poor persons accused of crime—with special reference to proposals for Public or Voluntary Defenders.

That the problem of the poor man in the criminal courts is receiving serious attention in England, as well as in this country, is shown by the recent introduction in the House of Commons of a bill for "Poor Persons' Defense," which bill, according to press reports, has the support of all political parties and is likely to be enacted shortly into law.

Indictments are too easily and freely found—too often upon illegal or insufficient evidence—much too often through public clamor, prejudice, malice or perjured testimony. An unscrupulous prosecutor could have almost any person indicted if he so desired. As the legal adviser to the grand jury, his power is tremendous, and, if misdirected, alarming. Wrongful indictments —although later dismissed—have blasted countless reputations and shattered many lives.

It is a monstrous situation that the vast power of the state is employed to prosecute a person and is powerless properly to protect or compensate him. An accused person should have all the power of the state to prove his innocence—quite as logically as the state has to prove his guilt.

The long fight to establish the office of Public Defender by law seems likely to result in favorable legislation in the near future.

New York City. MAYER C. GOLDMAN.

## Malden and the Puritans

SIR: Allow me to express my appreciation of Mr. Schriftgiesser's judicious and moving account of the significent episode at Malden, Massachusetts, which you recently published. Up here in our old Puritan Commonwealth we are thinking hard about it, and wondering what it will mean to the future of New England.

The first thing that strikes us about the whole thing is its utter "foreignness." We Americans have a valid and powerful religious consciousness, and the Puritan spirit has permeated the national life; but it was not bred in processions, or nourished by pilgrimages to "shrines." We take our religion in a different way.

Next year there will be celebrated the three hundredth anniversary of "the establishment of free popular government by Puritans in Massachusetts Bay." This government was founded upon the sturdy virtue of self-reliance, and we, as descendants of the Puritans, are wondering how much these 800,000 Malden "pilgrims," to whom we have so eagerly handed the ballot, will help us in carrying on the self-governing Commonwealth in which we and they are to live together.

Williamston, Mass. TALCOTT MINER BANKS.

## For Women Trained in Social Work

SIR: The New York City Police Department will have twenty-five new $3,000 positions for women as crime prevention investigators on January 1, in connection with its campaign against crime. These women will have the opportunity to study the causes and conditions of crime, and to suggest remedial measures.

The Municipal Civil Service Commission will conduct an examination for these positions. Applications will be received at the Municipal Building from December 30 to January 14. The Commission will accept for examination college graduates of three years' experience in specialized social work or high-school graduates with five years, within the age limits of 25 to 40.

An effort will be made to put the police work among women and children on the highest plane yet reached in this country.

MAY B. UPSHAW,
Assistant Director of Examinations.

New York City.

## Steinmetz and General Electric

SIR: An article by John Dos Passos entitled "Edison and Steinmetz: Medicine Men," in The New Republic of December 18, is in the form of a review of three books, including one by me entitled "Forty Years with General Electric." However, it seems to be less a review than a detached thesis on industrial literature. A reader can scarcely obtain from it any clear notion of what the books are about; and, to do justice to the reviewer, it may be that he thinks they are not about anything, at least anything that he knows or cares much about. . . .

Now, the question in my mind is one of a particular book's factual content. What I regret, specifically, is that Dos Passos conveys an erroneous impression of "Forty Years with General Electric" by thrusting it into his thesis at the outset, and later on becoming righteously indignant as to the failure of those by whom Steinmetz was surrounded to appreciate and understand the man, as to their tendency to think of him as a "funny, rare little animal" or a "pet oddity," and so on. I, for one, never viewed Steinmetz as a freak in any sense of the word. He seemed to me, throughout the thirty-five years of my intimacy with him, to be one of the great figures of his time—a great scientist, a great thinker and a great humanitarian.

It is quite true, as Dos Passos says, that Steinmetz felt every moment what his work meant in the terms of the ordinary human being. I may add that he even thought of Socialism in ordinary human terms; and that's something that not all Socialists are able to do.

The following passage from "Forty Years with General Electric" is the conclusion of an account of my last meeting with Steinmetz, which took place a short time before his death:

> Rare indeed were the intellectual gifts of Charles Proteus Steinmetz, but they were not his sole inheritance. A rare catholicity of spirit, which also was his, made the gifts a means of service, not only to industry and to science, but to mankind.

As mere writing that may not suit Dos Passos, but it scarcely portrays Steinmetz as a "funny, rare little animal" or a "pet oddity."

Schenectady, N. Y. JOHN T. BRODERICK.

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# Mr. Cabell's Farewell

*The Way of Ecben, by James Branch Cabell. New York: Robert M. McBride and Company. $2.50*

ALTHOUGH Mr. Cabell's new novel covers one hundred and fifty-one pages of large type, about fifty either are blank or carry only a chapter number and title with small devices of demons, sprites, witches, daggers, serpents, hour-glasses, queens. This novel is, says the author, possibly his last. It is slow reading and it is, therefore, appropriately brief. But here one is aware of the very lack of charity against which Mr. Cabell graciously pleads in his "Colophon Called: 'Hail and Farewell, Ettarre' "—an essay affixed to the novel and about fifty pages long, the blanks and devices being counted. In this essay, Mr. Cabell bids farewell to the three abstractions upon which his career as a writer has been based—to Poictesme, to Youth and to the Public, though he tells us that he hopes not to be excessively annoyed by his admirers in the future. "For," writes Mr. Cabell, "the touch of time . . . does not spare writers either. The uncharitable may even assert that 'The Way of Ecben' quite proves this fact." With this, the most devoted Cabellian must agree.

Yet, from the rest of the essay, which moralizes not too profoundly on youth and middle-age, to the conclusion that no novelist is ever good after fifty, the history of English fiction alone, without too much scruple, dissents. And this same history, one suspects, wonders why Mr. Cabell does not take his finger off the pulse of fame. He has been at pains to tell us that books stand or fall with that time which not even writers, by his own confession, can delay.

A reading of James Branch Cabell in two periods separated by six or seven years will be a reading of two distinct authors—perplexingly distinct; we cannot forget that they are one. We are perplexed and, being perplexed, ashamed. For, even at eighteen, how could we have liked his good books for the sake of the bad, for the sake of the Cabellian doctrine, and be ashamed of having liked them for that reason, at thirty? It is not that one knows better now where Mr. Cabell learned how to use his romantic irony: this is a fact of some interest in the history of American literature, for Cabell is our first novelist of stature to mold an American mind to something of the attitude of French romantic rationalism from Voltaire to Anatole France.

It is rather that Mr. Cabell, in spite of his estheticism—or, indeed, because of it, since estheticism is a morality holding other morality to be wrong—it is that Mr. Cabell is a didactic writer whose mind very early hardened into a few moral aphorisms, which in turn hardened his style into a few mannerisms, which, in their turn, have hardened the heart of the reader against him. No longer interested in his message—Mr. Cabell being too much interested in it himself—one found it no longer possible to admire a confected style.

There are two ways of looking at his doctrine, one philosophical and one historical.

Philosophically, his thesis is not sympathetic. It is the unhappy result of an attitude of defeat that has not come to terms with itself; for it is the later generation oftener than the defeated generation itself which gets far enough away to discover the exact nature of the loss; the thesis is an instance of what the Southern psychology of defeat could fall into when it was not certain just what had been defeated. This doctrine—and it is *mere* doctrine when, as often in Cabell, the book exists for the sake of it and it becomes what the psychologists call a "dissociation," a running on one side of the mind in order to conceal the other side, where lies the exact nature of the Southern loss—the doctrine is about as follows: That the sexual relation, not being what young men expect it to be, is one of the major disappointments of life; that we construct the image of an Ettarre with whom the sexual relation would be perfect; that because we cannot get Ettarre we must resign ourselves to a series of ridiculous disappointments; that, to make life bearable, we must keep thinking of Ettarre and hope that the next time will be better than the last; that vestrymen continue perversely to hope this; that a man who deserts his wife for Ettarre will find the quest of her futile in the end, and will come back home, but is meanwhile one of the Elect; that persons who do not admire this thesis are not aristocrats. This is Mr. Cabell's doctrine in its lowest terms—that is, stripped of the beautiful vocabulary of the author's text.

Looked at historically, the thesis is considerably more appealing. It should be related to the Southern humiliation that lasted up to Mr. Cabell's time, for by this, to a large extent, his attitude must have been determined. Any one at all familiar with the old-fashioned type of Southern genealogist will feel, after reading "The Lineage of Litchfield," or even "The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck," that the vast history of Dom Manuel is an heroic ancestry for the Old South, more heroic and more satisfactory than any of the actual genealogies that we know. And Poictesme is a more attractive ante-bellum Virginia: more attractive for certain reasons, which we shall see, to Mr. Cabell. Horvendile or Koschkei the Deathless is a livelier deity than the God of Tidewater Episcopalianism, considering the history of this God, who was not on the side of the bigger battalions in the war between the States.

It is, perhaps, the change of religion in the South from God to Mammon, from leisure to prosperity, which explains Mr. Cabell's setting up of a pantheon of his own—God being discredited and Mammon intolerable, if looked at square in the face, to a man of correct instincts. But the sting of his worship is not so great if one can give him, Greek-wise, a beautiful name. Mr. Cabell's name for him is Poictesme, which is not a little symbolic of the fashion in which the New South writers run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

In Mr. Cabell's generation, this change of religious impulse must have worked unconsciously, and for the sake of Mr. Cabell's talent it is probably well that it did, up to a certain point. For, up to a certain point, it permitted the values of his Southernism to support unconsciously his creative faculty. And he wrote a couple of distinguished books. However, in the lapses of this faculty, which begin to be conspicuous in "The High Place," the unconscious energy of the old Southern impulse makes for literary disaster. Though a genuine artist is probably a little less aware of his actual resources than of his own heartbeats, the lack of self-consciousness is fatal when the writer comes to believe that he is not using the deeper impulse, that he has dispensed with it, that he is using some other impulse. Mr. Cabell has evidently not been aware of the moral origin of Poictesme in the Old South: he has tried to escape from the Old South by making Poictesme a place of his own creation. And the true impulse, the blind impulse to vindicate the psychology of defeat, was set aside: the toughness of intellect required for such a vindication is very great, and it is easier to apologize.

This confusion of impulse has given us a Poictesme

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bloodless and mechanical, repeating itself in a vacuum; its roots are cut away. For only in "Jurgen" has Mr. Cabell rendered his impulse as if it had a whole world behind it, as if this world were in irreconcilable conflict with another world and the meaning of both were held firmly in his grasp. In most of his other books he is personal, diffuse and mannered. Every writer has his special problem which is a combination of his temperament and intelligence with his society and age, and under the best conditions the problem is difficult: Mr. Cabell's was made peculiarly difficult by his time, and he could not face it steadily. Poictesme soon acquired a sufficient logical coherence in itself for Mr. Cabell to go on repeating it without any longer stopping to think what it meant. In "The Way of Ecben" the straw world peters thinly out.

Poictesme could thus become anything, for under it anything could be disguised without clamoring to be called by its right name. Mr. Cabell's "dissociation" has led him into a number of values that the other half of him, were it not buried under Poictesme, would congenitally dislike. Two of these values are romantic realism and *arrivisme,* with their variations. Now, this is hard criticism, and the text on which it is based is "Straws and Prayerbooks," a curious volume that the general reader, who has no reason to feel humiliated—the business of professional critics—need not explore. For it seems that Poictesme is not a way of escape *into* the Old South, but an escape *from* it into a world that Mr. Cabell both dislikes and needs: the *fantasy of Poictesme will let one accept this world and go* on believing that one has not accepted it.

For this reason his long critical work, "Beyond Life," acquires a valuable historical interest. It is the attempt of a man to get out of a dilemma without facing it. Mr. Cabell has not been able to get down to the exact nature of his loss in the Civil War—the capital problem of his generation in the South, and, with a different emphasis, the capital problem of ours. For the nature of this loss should be one side of the dilemma opposed to the industrialist-realist-romantic enemy. Mr. Cabell has done some violence to philosophic thought by opposing the realist to the romantic, in order to conquer the dilemma without facing it. Romanticism and realism are twins; and Mr. Cabell's solution to his dilemma, because it is false, was rhetorical and Pyrrhic; it left the real difficulty untouched. He has not been aware how different his deeper impulse was from the explicit doctrine that he seized from the American environment, and it is only natural that he should suppose the romantic air he appropriated to be different from the realistic air around it. It is the same air.

There is a good deal of linkéd fuss and feathers about Mr. Cabell's valedictory to the novel. He does not quite close the door after him as he goes out. This is fortunate. If William de Morgan could begin writing after fifty, Mr. Cabell might begin again. Though his doctrine, in most of his books, has overwhelmed him, he has controlled it long enough to write two masterpieces in the serio-comic-fantastic *genre*—"Jurgen" and "Figures of Earth." These books have structure and form and are closely written; they contain genuine characters who only incidentally devote their lives to discovering the High Place that the ladies somehow, in his books, do not very stubbornly conceal. As an example of *fin de siècle* literature they are unsurpassed in America. And they will probably stand, with the best of F. Marion Crawford and Thornton Wilder, in a secure and curious corner of American fiction.

ALLEN TATE.

# Let the Dogs Howl

*Hanna, by Thomas Beer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 325 pages. $4.*

DURING the "disturbed selling on the New York Stock Exchange," as Mr. Lamont euphemistically described it, one of the tabloids appeared with the headline: "Morgan Battles to Stem Panic." Only as a last resort, and then without much success, did harried traders turn toward Washington for help. Their appeals were to J. P. Morgan and Company. They hoped, all in vain, that the bullish voice of Mr. Charlie Mitchell would delay the end of the world.

"Hoover?" said my cigar dealer in disgust on that black Thursday in October. "He don't mean anything. Morgan's our boss!"

Other newspaper headlines pointed, if less luridly, the same moral. The Hon. Hiram Bingham of Connecticut was admitting that he had hired a lobbyist to advise him on the tariff. Mr. Joe Grundy was settling his back in the witness chair and telling the Senate Committee that, of course, Pennsylvania should dominate the framing of tariff laws. From time to time, political parties adopt the war cry: "Less government in business." Business men never abandon their own slogan, occasionally voiced in public by honest Grundys, "More business in government."

This is not new. History can trace it in the political records of every country, not America alone. In 1899, Mr. Thomas Beer tells us, Mark Hanna "scandalized a dinner party" by remarking that all questions of government in a democracy were questions of money. The indignation of Mr. Hanna's fellow guests was not based on surprise; it was aroused by this crude expression of a truism known to everyone. One did not mention such things, any more than one mentioned ladies' legs. It was Mr. Hanna's fate to live in an age devoid of realism. Men hated him, and he was caricatured as a corrupt boss smeared with dollars. Men feared him, and he was obeyed and was powerful. The caricatures have lived after him. Yet, though smeared with dollars, Mark Hanna was not corrupt.

Mr. Beer is a realist, and thus his portrait is a true one. He admits that he is not interested in "the morals of leaders in a democracy." Neither was Hanna. He believed that Bryanism was wrong. He believed the gold standard right. He knew that McKinley had abandoned earlier free silver heresies and, as Theodore Roosevelt remarked with a distaste soon to fade, he advertised McKinley "like a patent medicine." Hanna elected McKinley in 1896, and he then became the devoted follower of the President. He re-elected him in 1900 and was shocked when Roosevelt, whose sanity he had seriously questioned, crashed into the White House through an assassination.

It is an appreciation, a realistic appreciation, which Mr. Beer has written rather than a biography. He has written, as always, with great charm; a charm which transcends even his over-devotion to adjectives. At hand, as he wrote, were voluminous reports and letters left by his father, who had been closely associated with Hanna as an "observer" for life insurance companies and other interests. Being uninterested in political morals, Mr. Beer offers no special pleading. But he cannot disguise his interest in such fundamental virtues as honesty, truth, sincerity, disinterest. These he attributes to Hanna.

It is obvious that the book will raise the question which my cigar dealer settled so flatly. Who rules America? Roosevelt, the great individualist, permitted his managers

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to accept financial aid from the moneyed interests he proposed to pulverize with his Big Stick. They chipped in to make him governor in 1898, and to make him president in his own right in 1904. It was Mark Hanna, declares Mr. Beer, who commanded his lobbyists to bring in the votes needed to pass legislation for the Panama Canal and for irrigation projects in the Southwest. Yet Roosevelt played a role, too. He talked, and people listened.

"We've saved the Treasury about seventy millions," said Mark Hanna after the Senate had voted for a canal through Panama instead of Nicaragua, "so let the dogs howl!"

> The dogs howled and are howling yet, in cheap biography and histories [writes Beer]. . . . But the hills were cleft and the oceans joined, where Hanna willed. High dams spill down their harvested flood for a harvest's good upon those plains where, when I was born, a horned skull might glimmer on unending dust. . . . These are facts, these achievements that once were dreams or trickeries of politicians. There could be no canal, it was innumerably proved in bars and drawings-rooms, and watering the desert was a child's notion. But the great ditch and the rills among trees all panoplied with fruit are facts. Let the dogs howl.

HENRY F. PRINGLE.

# Interchanges Between Nations

*A Survey of International Affairs, 1927, by Arnold J. Toynbee. New York: Oxford University Press. 613 pages. $8.50.*

A BOOK that aims to cover, in some six hundred pages, a year's history of the international affairs of thirty-odd nations is obviously not designed to be read from beginning to end by any one individual. If a person is interested in the foreign relations of Soviet Russia, for example, he is not likely to feel at the same time any tug of curiosity regarding the incident between Cuba and Uruguay over the question of Cuban sovereignty. Because of its very comprehensiveness, the function of the annual "Survey of International Affairs" is like that of the Encyclopedia Britannica or Webster's Dictionary—to collect dust on a shelf on the remote chance that its owner may some day have an impulse to know more about some fact, and sufficient leisure to obey that impulse.

Prepared by the British Royal Institute of International Affairs under the direction of Dr. Arnold J. Toynbee, this survey has come to be recognized as the standard yearbook on the relations between nations, because of its accurate objective summary of outstanding international events all over the world. A full index, maps, and cross-references to earlier volumes, facilitate its use. On the whole, its arrangement is geographical, one part of the latest volume being devoted to Europe, one to the American continents and one to China and the Far East. Africa, the Near East and Central Asia do not receive separate space, but are treated under the headings of the various European countries most interested in their fate.

Curiously enough, almost no attention is given to the events connected with the League of Nations. The year 1927, with which the book deals, saw the World Economic Conference at Geneva, an occurrence of greater interest and international significance than many which are treated at some length. Yet this conference is mentioned only indirectly and its findings are not even summarized. One can also observe a certain British reticence in the abbreviated discussion of the relations between the United States and the European nations. On the whole, however, considerable judgment is used in both the selection and the arrangement of material. What happened during the year 1927 is clearly and compactly stated. And the causes which produced those happenings are also sometimes discussed, although Dr. Toynbee permits himself a minimum of editorial comment.

Aside from college professors and other specialists, the buyers of this annual volume are, no doubt, disappointed readers of the daily press, who, having been enticed by four-inch headlines into reading a newspaper story about war between China and Russia, for example, discover that they are not enlightened thereby as to what the war is all about. Factual unbiased background material of a kind seldom contained in newspaper or magazine stories is abundantly supplied by Dr. Toynbee.

BEATRICE L. PITNEY.

# Theater Mysticism

*Creative Theater, by Roy Mitchell. New York: The John Day Company. 256 pages. $4.*

IF the so-called "art-theater" movement of the years 1914-1924 had been something more than a fever of fine words and good wishes, such a book as Roy Mitchell's "Creative Theater" would now seem an anachronism. For though Mr. Mitchell has done more of his own thinking and has had more experience in the theater than the theorists of that time, the burden of his message is much the same as theirs. But now that the movement has spent its force, now that "art theaters" have either been absorbed by the show-business through prosperity or have descended to the position of provincial phenomena, it has become evident that the serious task of creating a theater in this country is still something for the future to accomplish. So that, despite Mr. Mitchell's rhapsodic tone and belated eloquence, which make him appear a sort of Little Theater Rip Van Winkle returning in 1929 to remind us of the promises and programs of the old insurgent days, this book of his contains ideas that might still be of immediate value and usefulness.

"Might be," for unfortunately the book is perhaps more significant for its defects than for its virtues. It succeeds not so much in convincing us of the justness of its principles as in revealing to us why those principles have never really taken hold in the consciousness of theater people. It bears witness again to the deplorable fact that most of those who have identified themselves with the "better things" in our theater have nearly always compromised their cause by a sort of impassioned and blundering amateurishness.

Mr. Mitchell's style is of the kind which makes prose poetry out of the most commonplace exposition of facts. And his systematic avoidance of specific cases, his transcendental aviation high in the air of abstraction, give one the impression that this is not a book about the theater at all, but only a volume of effusions apropos of the theater. Nevertheless, it would be beside the point to insist on this aspect of the book, because its fault is not a fault of writing, but a fault of thinking.

For example, let us examine his treatment of the relation of literature to the theater. Following Gordon Craig, Mr. Mitchell properly enough takes issue with those who consider the theater an annex of literature, as if the whole art were only a means of illustrating the play. To

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refute this, he simply adopts the opposite view and arrives at an almost equally fallacious conclusion. The words of the play, he assures us, are merely a sort of supplement to the stage action, a supplement to clarify and give savor to what we see. This only confuses the debate, for why, we ask, if the theater is a independent art, does it require words to supplement it? An inquiry into the origins of the drama might supply us with a solution. All the elements of the theater are one. They all spring and develop naturally from the seed of the same dramatic impulse. Words are as organic to stage action as gesture; indeed they are themselves a species of gesture. A man moved to pray does not utter the words of his prayer to explain his kneeling—both are spontaneous expressions of one fundamental emotion. The fact that plays are written by isolated literary individuals who often have little sympathy for the actors performing them is one of the misfortunes of the modern theater, but it is a sign of loose thinking to deduce from this that the play's text is something separate from the theatrical whole.

In what appears to Mr. Mitchell himself to be the crucial point of his book, he defines the art of the theater as the art of motion. This would make group dancing the purest form of the theater. But Mr. Mitchell realizes that, theatrically speaking, there may be more "motion" in a quiet family drama than in the most elaborate ballet. So that after detailing for us the various types of "motion," he concludes by admitting that all external motion is really a manifestation of something within the actor, which he calls the vortex. But what we must learn is how the actor may use and control this "vortex," and here again we end by knowing little more than we did when we began.

Mr. Mitchell, however, does make one vital suggestion. He enjoins theater people to attach themselves to a local center. This is the way to a community of tradition without which nothing permanent or important in the theater can be achieved. If all the members of a theater unit shared a common background of education and interests, if they all emerged from the same town, city or social group and thought of themselves as voices to express these interest, they would become one with the town or city of which they were a part. The theater group would then be the city's focus: the actors and the audience would be the same kind of people with the same aspirations who together would celebrate a common rite—the Play.

If Mr. Mitchell had made this idea the germ of his book, it might have had a clearer contour and a more persuasive meaning. As it stands, it does not represent a matured system of thought, definitely formed and completed, but the result of a ferment of ideas agitating the author's mind. It is young with excitement, but it clinches no argument and establishes no belief; and finally, because its feeling is so sympathetic and its substance so rich in potentialities, its very merits exasperate us.

HAROLD CLURMAN.

# Notes on Novels

*Sincerity, by John Erskine. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.*

THIS book, perhaps, would have been better in the essay form; the various shades of meaning elaborated upon the word sincerity could then have been developed strictly as ideas. As Mr. Erskine has written it, they are applied to characters who seem little more than puppets. If Winthrop and his wife Isabel, who runs away to a dubious freedom in Europe, and Mary, Isabel's friend, who lives with Winthrop for ten years, supposedly as his wife, were noble figures, we might receive the impression that the drive to sincerity was so acute in them that it wholly motivated their action. But it seems that the women, both novelists, play with the idea of sincerity in mild dissatisfaction with their lives, and are not compelled into the odd course of the story. Beginning where Ibsen left off when Nora walked out of her doll's house, Mr. Erskine, troubled with an obvious but potentially interesting problem—her possible return—allows Isabel a new life abroad, and portrays the gentle decay of Winthrop and Mary at home. They are successful and respectable pillars of society, quite honest hypocrites. Isabel, a simple, orthodox soul, meets with adventures in Europe, and comes back finally to claim her husband. At the end, he vaguely plans to outwit her and run away to some uncertain freedom of his own; but then, it is probably too late. The doctrine enunciated is that sincerity caused the break-up of a triple marriage and friendship relation too delicate for theory, or too ordinary; that instincts were foregone because of an attempt to practise the idea of sincerity; that it is better, because of the present demands of society, not to be too sincere. Thus, Isabel comes back. "We've stopped being sincere, and, therefore, can be natural again."

The word "sincerity" is left happily undefined; but Isabel was in fact more accurately "natural" when trying to be sincere in her relations. If there is a subtlety in the book, it is that there is in the characters no deep courage to sincerity; they are mildly frustrated because they are mild people. The implication is that life is like that and that they had better live under the comfortable banner of contemporary morals as they are. The result is that Winthrop, and Mary, and Isabel, a less vivid Nora, are not profound or significant. The prose is well used and sometimes rich.

R. G. E.

*Living, by Henry Green. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.*

THE mystery of numbers—the human contents of a procession of flivvers or cubical houses—seems to haunt Mr. Green. These dull streets in Birmingham or Liverpool—who lives in them, and how, and why?

> What is a town then, how do I know? . . . Each life dully lived and the life next it, pitched together, walls between built, dully these lives went out onto streets, promenaded dullness there. Ugly clothes, people, houses. They went along through these, strangers to it, she did not recognize her own form of ugliness in it.
>
> Thousands of lamps, hundreds of streets, each house had generally a mother and complacent father, procreation, breeding, this was the only natural thing there in that miserable thing home, natural to them because it was domesticated. Procreating was like having a dog, in particular spaniels. Fido who I'm so grateful to. Miserable people. Clerks dregs lowest of people these not fat and meat but like bellied fat or schoolmasters, in particular cod.

This is as near as the author comes to a definition, and nearer than he comes anywhere else to snobbishness. Living is ugly, he implies, because it is hopeless. Hoping for a new radio can make life as beautiful as hoping for love or a year on the Riviera, but living—"Living"—thwarts and tarnishes these hopes.

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He opens a row of houses and shows the people of the Dupret factory in Birmingham—Brummagem, they call it. The shop itself is not prospering, and every one in it shares its decay. The owner's inexperienced son falls heir and takes active charge, by way of consoling himself for a disappointment in love. Discipline does not restore the shop; nor revolt at discipline, bad conditions and dangerous equipment; nor the final ousting of the older generation. A girl, Lil, rebels at keeping house for her father and foster-father and the man they have picked out for her to marry. She finds a worse man, tries to elope with him, and loses both.

Around this outline grows a substance as stubborn and ugly as a cramped burdock. The miserable people in "that miserable thing home" go on living sordid, unjustified lives, and you are drawn into them. The artful, choppy style, disdaining the definite article, is hard and clear, and throws into relief the wholly delightful, artless dialogue.

There is still the title. "Living for the Factory Workers of the Dupret Shop in Birmingham" would have been fair enough. But projecting the picture over the human race—or does he mean to include all biology?—invites protest, and not from optimists alone. M. T.

*A House Is Built, by Bernard Eldershaw. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.*

THIS Australian novel is one of high excellence. The name signed to it serves to disguise the fact that it is the result of the collaboration of two young ladies of Sydney, the Misses Bernard and Eldershaw, but they have done their work so skillfully that the book nowhere betrays the fact that two hands have worked on it. Briefly, it tells of the rise of the house of Hyde, dealers in ships' stores and foodstuffs in the early days of the last century at Sydney, New South Wales. There is a perfect correlation between the rise of the house and the growth of the country. The house enters upon a period of unparalleled prosperity during the gold rush of the middle of the century. The elder Hyde is a former sea-captain, and represents the acquisitive spirit in its most naïve form; the son, William, suffers from propriety and social aspirations, but retains a financial canniness that brings him success; the grandson, to whom the business eventually falls, is the type that so often develops in business families—the type whose interests are esthetic and retiring rather than acquisitive and gregarious. Thus the book ends on a note of futility. Intertwined with the story of the business is an excellent account of social life in Australia for the years covered, with the result that we have a picture of unusual merit of the bourgeois English colonial spirit in action. We see what sort of men these Englishmen are who conceive of colonizing as an experiment in the uncritical extension of middle-class English life in all its minutiae. C. H. G.

*Pidgin Cargo, by Alice Tisdale Hobart. New York: The Century Company. $2.50.*

"PIDGIN CARGO" is a novel about a river and a man, two characters who dominate the life about them—the first, the Valley and the soul of the Chinese people inhabiting it; the second, the little group of foreigners and natives who make up the man's ménage. Eben Hawley, descendant of American pioneers, retired captain of a freighter on the China coast, is obsessed in middle life by a vision of trade on the upper Yangtse. The desire to build a steamboat that can penetrate the gorges of the Long River, opening to foreign trade the rich province of Szechuan, becomes his religion. It gives to his eyes the same light that the passion for converts gives to those of the Reverend Foster in his lonely mission up beyond Ichang. Margaret, the delicately bred wife of Eben, seeing this resemblance, recognizes her husband for the idealist that he is and, like the consorts of his pioneer ancestors, submits to the inevitable. Fortunately, in her own barren life in the interior, she doesn't foresee the enslavement of her only child in this futile effort to conquer the River, nor the desertion of his young wife, a girl as typical of this generation as Margaret is of a past one, because of that enslavement. Though there is sufficient controversial material in Mrs. Hobart's treatment of China and the Chinese, foreign trade and the Young Nationalists, to inveigle the student of Far Eastern affairs, there is not enough to overshadow for the literary reader an absorbing story set in a background of sinister beauty. W. T.

*Dr. Krasinski's Secret, by M. P. Shiel. New York: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.*

MR. SHIEL'S method and his purpose in writing are remarkably different from each other. He believes that the world is not a very good place to live in, and he proposes to do something about it. Yet there is about Mr. Shiel nothing of the evangelist. His story rushes along its course with sharp effects ranging from Celtic charm to smell of brimstone. In it there are a diphtheria-carrying orphan, a Dr. Krasinski, who tries to lead the orphan to a happy alcoholic death, a radio-emanating gem, noble Irish beauties, a fortune to be gained by marrying one of them, intercepted letters, a corrupt English army blood, an engineer who is also a pasha, and two hypnotists. For once these devices do not create melodrama: Mr. Shiel chooses his medium and his properties carefully and subordinates them to his end effect. The world is not a very real place for him. Even the deaths of his finest heroes only serve to heighten the book. He does not like the way human beings are living and are forced to live. Recognizing the fundamental axiom that man tends to stay alive, he proposes, in a style constantly exploding with bomb-shells and skyrockets, to create a new man with a new mind by changing the conditions of living. Such fantastic material displayed with such fantastic rhetoric delights the reader while his mind is still between the covers, but once finished, this book slips easily out of memory. J. I. N.

## Contributors

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